

PEACE STUDIES SERIES VOL 1

Youth &

PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN KENYA



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YOUTH AND PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN KENYA

YOUTH AND PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN KENYA

Edited by
Kimani Njogu



COMMUNICATIONS

"Working Towards a Better World"

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of Professor Wangari Maathai (1 April 1940-25 September 2011). Professor Wangai Maathai taught us to treat the earth with respect and kindness for the sake of humanity. Her devotion to the pursuit of a sustainable environment contributed in the democratization of Kenya. Her struggles were not in vain.

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Acknowledgements

This book is a collection of important and thought provoking papers presented at the *Youth and the Social and Economic Impact of Peaceful and Fair Elections* conference held on 6th-8th August 2012. The conference was organised by Africa Health and Development International (AHADI) with the support of Rockefeller Foundation. It brought together participants from academic and civil society institutions in Kenya. During the forum, participants were able to proactively initiate a national dialogue on peaceful and fair elections with the political and economic elite, civil society, faith based organizations, private sector, community leaders and other opinion shapers across the country. It had a particular focus on what youth can do to ensure that the nation does not find itself on the brink of the precipice again.

We are grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation Office of Eastern Africa for making it possible for AHADI to work with others to address issues of peaceful and fair elections in Kenya. We are also thankful to the panelists, the participants and the contributors of this book.

The AHADI and Twaweza Communications teams deserve gratitude for organizing the conference and coordinating various activities. I am also grateful to Catherine Bosire for designing this publication. May the spirit of sharing knowledge thrive in our midst.

Kimani Njogu
Nairobi.

Introduction

This publication results from a Conference held on 7th and 8th August 2012 to discuss youth and the socio-economic impact of peaceful and fair elections in Kenya. The Forum was organized by Africa Health and Development International (AHADI), with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation. It was opened by Justice David Majanja on behalf of Dr. Willy Mutunga, the Chief Justice and President of the Supreme Court. The Forum brought together key institutions in the public and private sectors.

The Conference was a platform to create a better understanding of the imperatives of peaceful and fair elections and anchor the principle of citizen agency in ensuring that the nation remains peaceful and stable at moments of transition. Since the 2007/2008 Post Election Violence (PEV), Kenya has experienced cycles of crises, occasionally expressed violently. Further, the climate of anxiety, fear and tension has been accentuated by the International Criminal Court confirmation of charges and the impending high stakes general elections to be held on March 4, 2013. The Forum proactively initiated a national dialogue on peaceful and fair elections with the political and economic elite, civil society, faith based organizations, private sector, community leaders and other opinion shapers across the country. It had a particular focus on what youth can do to ensure that the nation does not find itself on the brink of the precipice again.

More significantly, the conference explored what youth can do individually and collectively to ensure that the next elections, being held fifty years after Kenya attained independence, are peaceful and fair. Kenya is primarily an agricultural country and during peace time there is increase in agricultural production and export of surplus goods. Furthermore, the livestock sector flourishes and opportunities for food security open up. However, in times of conflict, people are killed or maimed, families are displaced and traumatized, mistrust is entrenched, farming and livestock communities are affected, agriculture suffers and food security is threatened. Cross ethnic marriages are strained due to increased animosity and suspicion thereby destroying community resilience. Viewed within the context of climatic change and declining yields, it is vitally important that farming and livestock sectors are buttressed from destabilizing and violent political and social events. This can be attained through a convergence of peace and justice not only at times of political transition but throughout the life of the nation.

Kenya ought to urgently embrace justice, peace and democratic practice if the country is to unlock issues identified as Agenda Four of the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR) process and move towards sustainable development. These issues relate to implementation of the Constitution promulgated in August 2010, youth unemployment, national cohesion and integration, respect for the rule of law and ending impunity, land and socio-economic disparities. The resolution of these issues can open the path for sustainable development. When violent conflict breaks out, there are normally fundamental consequences at the political, economic, social and environmental levels: lives are lost, property destroyed and resources are diverted to conflict resolution processes instead of infrastructural development (health, education, roads, energy and so on). Youth become active participants in the conflict, either as aggressors, peacemakers or victims, and families are destabilized. But when peace and justice prevail, citizens flourish and enjoy the benefits of social justice and freedom and financial and social capital are nurtured for overall development.

Over 75% of the population of Kenya is under 35 years old. Faced by the challenges of unemployment, harassment by organs of the state, exclusion from political participation, poverty and the uncertainty of tomorrow, the Kenyan youth are generally an angry lot and can be easily manipulated by power hungry elite. But youth are also best equipped to embody the 'third side' and become the national hope and lifeline. They can break the constraints and limitations of ethnic identity to usher in transformative, transparent and accountable leadership; they can challenge and question their elders if the latter seek to misuse them to illegally acquire or maintain power; they can use advances in information technology to reach out to each other and other nations; and they can demand that the rest of the world intervenes as part of the responsibility to protect citizens wherever they are. Considering their numbers, innovation and energies, youth can be instrumental in ensuring peace, justice, reconciliation and sustainable development.

We are grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation for the support and the judiciary for sharing its reform agenda with forum participants. We are also grateful to all participants for sharing their thoughts on how youth can contribute in the creation of a peaceful and just society. Together, we can make Kenya a better place for all.

Kimani Njogu
Conference Convenor
Nairobi, December 10, 2012.

Statement from The Judiciary

Justice David S. Majanja

Elections are a crucial part of the governance of any country. They have far reaching impacts on political and socio-economic aspects of a country. The conduct of successful elections is therefore at the heart of any thriving democracy. The ability to conduct successful elections is dependent on many factors. One of these is having all the institutions involved in the electoral process effectively play their respective roles.

It is not in doubt that institutional failure was a major contributor to the violent events of 2007/2008 in Kenya. The Judiciary received its fair share of blame for these failures. Neither is it in doubt that lack of confidence in the impartiality of the Judiciary had the effect of creating an alternative form of dispute resolution: violence. Those who resorted to violence cited lack of confidence in the Judiciary as their reason for not taking their disputes to the courts. The Judiciary was no longer seen as the home of justice but injustice. The unprecedented scale of the violence resulted in a sobering realization that we could no longer afford to let sleeping dogs lie.

Throughout Kenya's history, the Judiciary has not been perceived as the faultless handmaiden of justice and guardian of human rights that it ought to be. The public has been skeptical of the Judiciary. Court processes, especially those relating to election petitions, were shrouded in a lot of mystery and were well beyond the comprehension of the average Kenyan. Most of these were eventually decided on technicalities, with the majority being concluded long after the general elections and close to the eve of the succeeding electoral term. The process of appointment of judicial officers portrayed a deficiency in the much needed independence and transparency of such a crucial arm of government.

Moreover, the radical surgery of the Judiciary had failed to restore full public confidence in the institution. Courts were rightly seen as institutions of exploitation and oppression of the average Kenyan and as minions of the government. Restoring this confidence was not going to be a walk in the park.

It was a herculean task that would necessitate an overhaul in judicial culture. Trust once lost is hard to regain. Yet, this trust is vital to the electoral process, because the courts sit at the very apex of this process. Courts are the final arbiter of disputes that arise from the electoral process. Judicial decisions affect power and resource relations immensely.

With the passing of the Constitution, the people of Kenya foresaw salvation. The Constitution contained the blueprint for the necessary reforms that would set the Judiciary on the much needed course of recovery. Not only did it set out principles that would govern the exercise of judicial authority, but it also provided for more public participation in judicial processes. It established a new Judicial Service Commission with broad representation. The hiring of judicial officers is now open, fair and transparent and involves public participation. Public participation is one of the national values and a key pillar of the right to access justice.

For the first time in our history, we have a Supreme Court whose portfolio includes the exclusive determination of the validity of presidential elections. In order to ensure that election disputes are not delayed, the framers of the Constitution set specific timelines within which electoral disputes are to be determined.

After a raft of enactments including the Judicial Service Act, 2011 and the Supreme Court Act, 2011, the Judiciary has now moved from reforms to transformation. Reforms in and of themselves are useless unless there is a change of the institutional culture. Transformation is about people and this is why the Chief Justice has recently launched the Judiciary Transformation Framework 2012-2016. The purpose of the Framework is to build on the legal reforms that have already been instituted. The Framework is a beacon in the path towards institutional transformation. The Framework seeks to appropriately reposition the Judiciary to be an engine for societal transformation that responds to the needs of Kenya's diverse society. The key pillar for this transformation is to improve access to justice. As a Judiciary, we realize that we are a service provider and our service is justice. The Framework is built around delivering access to justice.

At this juncture I will highlight some of the transformation initiatives that have been launched and which are aimed at making the institution more transparent and its officers more effective and efficient. The Judicial Service Commission has implemented rigorous provisions for the appointment of judges and magistrates in order to ensure that the caliber of serving judicial

officers is enhanced. I am sure that with these processes in place Kenyans are assured that the judicial officers are not only competent but also beyond ethical or moral reproach. The role of the Judicial Training Institute (JTI) has been strengthened. JTI is the Judiciary's institution of higher learning. Its role is to promote effective training for judges and magistrates and judicial staff. The value of continuous relevant training of judicial staff in the reform agenda cannot be downplayed. JTI is also strategically positioned to play a supporting role in the judicial reform effort. As such, it will be involved in providing training to judges and magistrates on electoral law and practice in the run-up to the 2013 General Elections.

The Chief Justice has recognized that the forthcoming elections present a particular challenge to the Judiciary. With the aim of increasing the state of election preparedness in the Judiciary, the *Working Committee on Election Preparations* was unveiled on the 10th of May 2012. This Committee is expected to spearhead the Judiciary's preparation activities in the run-up to the elections. The Committee is expected to advise the Judiciary on the administrative measures that need to be taken to ensure that the Judiciary has the necessary capacity to deal with elections disputes.

The Committee has been engaging with other stakeholders in the electoral process in order to streamline the preparation activities of all the stakeholders. Working with stakeholders allows us to share ideas and experiences and also receive feedback as to how effective our own preparation activities are. This is all in an effort to make the Judiciary transparent, particularly in its role in electoral dispute resolution (EDR).

In addition to joining hands with stakeholders in the preparation for the 2013 elections, the Committee is looking into ways of public engagement so as to enlighten the public on the various avenues that exist for dispute resolution aside from the courts in the electoral process. Traditionally, courts have been the main actor in the electoral dispute resolution process. Despite the fact that this role is now shared with other institutions such as the Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and the Political Parties Disputes Tribunal, the public is not fully aware of the categories of disputes that are best referred to these bodies rather than the courts.

There are several achievements that point to the fact that the Judiciary is engaged in the EDR process. Firstly, the High Court and the Court of Appeal have been lauded for expeditiously dealing with the election date case. Likewise, other disputes relating to key provisions touching on the election process are being determined with record speed. More recently, the High Court was able

to determine the 136 cases presented challenging the IEBC delimitation of Constituencies and County Assembly Wards. These cases were dealt with and finalized within the time prescribed by the Constitution.

It is becoming more and more apparent that Kenyans are beginning to regain trust in the Judiciary. We are confident that Kenyans have taken note of the efforts that the Judiciary is taking to improve service delivery and brace itself for electoral dispute resolution. We have noted, with satisfaction, that more and more Kenyans are approaching the courts to enforce their constitutional rights and to challenge violations of the same, even by the government. We take this as a sign that Kenyans have confidence in the reform process that the Judiciary is undergoing.

What then is the role of the youth in the matters I have outlined? First and foremost, the courts exist for all Kenyans and are open to every Kenyan. Kenyans must feel free to use the dispute resolution mechanisms provided by the law. The Judiciary on its part is making every effort to ensure that justice is accessible to every Kenyan. Second, the Court and the judicial officers are at your service and you must expect accountability. Please engage with us when you feel our services are below par. The Judiciary has a fully staffed office of the Ombudsperson who is available to deal with all complaints. The Judiciary has a shortcode 5838 for lodging complaints and compliments. We are happy to receive comments and compliments for it is through affirmation that we know we are doing right.

I would like to state that we have an obligation as citizens to participate fully in public affairs. This is an obligation that the youth of this country must take seriously. We are leaders of today and not tomorrow and leadership means taking responsibility. It means that we must condemn violence, corruption and hate speech. We must preach peace, talk to each other and learn the art of principled compromise that enables us to move forward. The Courts alone cannot institute these values into the society. It will take each one of us to teach our fellow Kenyans the values that underlie our democracy.

The Judiciary would like to assure all Kenyans that no effort is being spared in preparing for electoral dispute resolution in the forthcoming elections. We remain optimistic that peace initiatives will reduce the number of disputes and lead to peaceful, free and fair elections.

I am proud to say that the Judiciary is up to the task of fair, efficient and effective dispute.

Chapter One

Youth As Leaders: Transforming Society By Building Bridges

Kimani Njogu

...if the democratic system is based on election, the public has to be more conscious as to who they elect because their vote is sacred. And that capacity to mobilize the population towards participation is a very broad avenue, which we have not pursued, which we have not managed to travel. Hopefully there are young people now who are going to motivate others so they might go down this road... It's one where the people arise and vote and elect a person who will leave a precedent in the histories of native peoples. There is a key thing we must cultivate aside from our participation, and that is to take pride in our successes. There are successes... on the part of young people, and by women. (Rigoberta Menchú Tum –Quoted in Zajonc, 2006).

I do think the best way for young people to gain confidence in themselves – because we are afraid and we all lack confidence – the best way to do that is to reach out to someone else and work together on a project, or help someone else in some way. Then you rise out of your own ego and you are serving people around you (Adolf Perez Esquivel, 2006).

Introduction

In December 2012, three radio Disk Jockeys (DJs) went on hunger strike for six days while broadcasting at the GlassHouse non-stop in order to promote a peaceful electoral process. The Ghetto Radio presenters – Mbusi, Sollo, and Essie - did this under the theme '**Vote4Peace Vote4Kenya**' ahead of the elections slated for March 4, 2013. This is part of the station's annual *Serious Request Kenya* campaign. The youth in the Ghetto radio station are providing leadership and charting a way for the future of Kenya. This action by Ghetto radio points to a persistent and feverish anxiety in the country courtesy of a national

leadership that has over the years supervised misuse of public institutions for personal aggrandizement.

Indeed, over the last four decades or so there has been a crisis of leadership in Kenya and it is becoming extremely urgent to nurture, grow and harvest a youth leadership that embodies values such as integrity, inclusiveness and trust in the conduct of public affairs as we embark on the journey towards democratic practices and sustainable socio-economic processes. Currently Kenya, the economic giant of East Africa, is undergoing a difficult period in its history brought about by rampant unemployment among the youth, insecurity and threats of terrorist attacks, endemic corruption, unaccountable public officers, political and social violence, poverty in rural areas and informal urban settlements, lack of faith in governance institutions, and ethnic tensions. But these challenges can be ameliorated and resolved through a review of local and national leadership. In order to reduce inequalities, anchor the ideals of democracy and entrench peace, justice and reconciliation, it is imperative that a new leadership that is committed to service and social transformation courageously steps forward to take charge of rebuilding the country. But this new leadership must be willing to listen deeply to its inner self and to others. When we engage in active listening, we see the disharmony and feel the pain and anxiety around us. We are also able to experience glimpses of hope and optimism, even if momentarily.

The violence that exploded in Kenya in late December 2007 and January 2008 following the disputed 2007 presidential election results was shocking as thousands of people were killed, maimed and displaced; property worth millions destroyed and many families rendered destitute. Hundreds of Kenyans are still living outside the country and there are internally displaced persons in camps five years later. The post election violence was, without doubt, the culmination of years of tension related to access to state power and control of state resources as well as weak governance institutions including the judiciary and electoral bodies. Following the widespread violence and under the aegis of the African Union Panel of Eminent African Personalities (PEAP), chaired by Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, a four-part Agenda was put together by the representatives of the contending parties; namely, Party of National Unity (PNU)/Government under the leadership of Mwai Kibaki and the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) under Raila Odinga. The negotiations conducted under the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation process started on 29th January 2008. On 28th February 2008, the National Accord and Reconciliation Agreement was signed. It paved the

way for a Coalition Government and the road to a new Constitution, promulgated on August 27, 2010.

The third side

Although the country has made strides after passing the Constitution and parliament has passed crucial Bills to initiate reforms in a number of sectors including the judiciary and the police, much still needs to be done. The sharp inequalities and socio-economic contradictions that have characterized the country for decades are likely to burst at the seams unless addressed purposefully and urgently. Unfortunately, the current national leadership is so alienated from the people that it just doesn't get it. Driven by selfish interests and the pursuit of power through ethnic and regional mobilization, the political and economic elite do not endear hope to the people. At another level, the communities are themselves divided on the basis of clan and ethnicity as they struggle over meager resources. A different type of leadership is needed to move the country to a level in which citizens can start to trust the state to deliver services transparently and in an accountable manner. Such a leadership would be youthful, intercultural and global in outlook.

Writing in *“Leading Through Conflict: How Successful Leaders Transform Differences into Opportunities”* (2006) the American writer, Mark Gerzon, encourages us to see beyond ‘us’ and ‘them’ and to develop a ‘third side’ which crosses boundaries. He urges us to always keep the ‘whole’ in mind through broadening and deepening of awareness, intention and action in our journey through life. When we broaden our intention to serve the whole; when we reach out to others our actions and interactions become inclusive and we are on the path to becoming globalized leaders and not leaders of our local communities and ethnic groups. This deliberate broadening of perspective to include all that exists in the world is urgent in Kenya and cannot be left to chance.

In my view the youth are best equipped to embody the ‘third side’ and become the national hope and lifeline. They can break the shell of ethnic solidarity if it is placed in violent opposition to other communities; they can question their elders if the latter seek to misuse them to illegally acquire or maintain power; they can use advances in information technology to reach out to other nations; they can demand that the rest of the world intervenes in violent intra-or inter state conflicts as part of the responsibility to protect citizens wherever they are. Considering their numbers, innovation and energies, youth

can be instrumental in ensuring peace, justice, reconciliation and sustainable development.

But what type of leadership can the youth provide in nation-states that are increasingly plural and where positive co-existence based on intercultural understanding and tolerance is a major challenge? How can boundary crossing leadership be nurtured in our institutions? I want to suggest that by providing a leadership based on **UTU** (our collective humanity), we can nurture boundary crossing leadership and transform our societies. Because youth leadership in Kenya is not geographically or territorially bound but *transnational* we can deliberately tap on the diasporas for social and economic development. The transnationality of Kenyan youth coupled with advances in information technology can also be instrumental in the pursuit of peace and justice. In doing so, youth can reach out to others and in the process affirm their humanness; their UTU. The Kiswahili saying “Mtu ni Utu” (a person is humanness) underlines the fact that there is something that separates us from other creatures on earth; there is an inner value in all of us which is occasionally suppressed for personal ends, including the pursuit of power and material things. UTU emphasizes forgiveness, sharing with others and showing compassion. UTU encourages us to go beyond the ‘self’ to the ‘other’ in order to find fulfillment. Just as language is created through interaction, so too is our humanity. Our relationships are always dialogic; the further we move from this interactivity the more we are alienated from our humanity.

Exclusion of youth

The continent of Africa is faced by a wide range of challenges which have a direct relevance to the youth who constitute the majority population: communities are threatened by the struggle for power and limited resources; rapid rural-urban migration has led to the mushrooming of poverty-ridden informal settlements in the cities; unemployed youth are desperate and some have resorted to drugs and crime as they seek for ways to deal with their challenges; proliferation of small arms is leading to increased insecurity; and endemic corruption is denying citizens of basic rights. As if that is not enough, Western and Eastern nations have continued to loot the continent’s natural resources without giving anything substantial in return to communities where the resources are located. As these events take place, African countries are struggling to uphold the principles of liberal democracy and to pay their debts to international lenders, even if those debts only benefit the ruling class with

the aid of global partners. Moreover, the institutions and instruments of national leadership inherited from the colonial experience have generally not been liberating and the state in Africa has not effectively delivered to its people mainly because it has avoided citizen participation in the determination of the national agenda. Yet citizen participation was at the heart of governance in those African societies that were stable and progressive before the onslaught of the slave trade and colonial dispossession (Davidson, 1992: 295). Political independence in Africa has not substantially opened opportunities for economic and social transformation for the majority of the people.

Whereas leaders of liberation including Sekou Toure of Guinea, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana served Africa well by contributing in the attainment of political independence, there is concern that the continent has not produced enough leaders of development and social justice. Neither have the post-independence leaders purposefully reached out to Africans in the diaspora, the way earlier ones reached out to the African American community and the Caribbean Islands for inspiration and solidarity. The continent is looking for leaders of democracy, pan-Africanism and wider transnational solidarity (Mazrui 2007: 39). Strategies that have been used by leaders since the early 1960s in many African states have tended to be inward looking, insulated and constrained; the involvement of citizens in the management of national affairs has tended to be tokenistic and limited. Linked as they have been to the colonial political and economic systems, they have been only minimally creative and innovative. This has led to frustration and disillusionment with the state and ruling elite in view of its tendencies towards consumerism and glorification of materialism, in an environment of high incidences of poverty and other deprivations. Citizens have been, at times, apathetic and not demanded better performance from leaders. Even when such demands are made there are no sufficient and enforceable legal structures to hold leadership accountable to its people. The judiciary, that would otherwise have functioned to arbitrate between the executive and citizens, has been manifestly compromised in favor of the executive, legislature and business sector. Additionally, the manipulation of ethnic difference, within a context of corruption, poverty and illiteracy, has ensured that the political and economic elite keep their hold on power. Can this be changed through a greater focus on the quality of leadership generated from the continent?

Kenya has continued to have high unemployment rates among the youth in spite of initiatives towards poverty reduction and employment creation. For

example, at independence, the government addressed unemployment through Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1965 by ensuring that Kenyans had access to employment in the public and private sectors. But in the 1990s, under the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) employment in the formal sector was drastically reduced. When the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) attained power in 2002, the government addressed unemployment through the Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation (ERSWEC) development blueprint. The ERSWEC facilitated a number of policy reforms to address the challenges of youth unemployment. These included the implementation of Free Primary Education; creation of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs; and the launching of the National Youth Enterprise Fund for providing youth with loans to start business enterprises. In 2008 the government came up with another development blueprint covering the period 2008 to 2030 called Vision 2030. Vision 2030 has taken incorporated the ERSWEC reforms and launched *Kazi kwa Vijana* (Work for Youth Program). Despite these efforts, unemployment in Kenya continues to rise among the youth. It is estimated that out of 500,000 youth who enter the market every year, only 25 percent are absorbed (Government of Kenya and United Nations Development Program, 2007).

Additionally, youth who constitute the majority population often feel marginalized and excluded from local and national decision making processes. Often, they have been viewed as belonging to an elusive 'tomorrow'. Faced by the challenges of unemployment, continuous harassment by organs of the state, corruption in the public service, poverty and the uncertainty of the future, the Kenyan youth are generally a pessimistic and angry lot, easily misused and manipulated by a power hungry elite. If the country is to transform itself, it must of necessity seek systematic ways of harnessing youth energies in a positive way; the youth ought to be guided towards active non-violence as a method of expressing dissatisfaction. A reading of *Healing the Wound: Narratives About the 2007/2008 Post Election Violence in Kenya* shows that youth were extensively involved in the violence and many unquestionably followed the orders of their leaders to kill and destroy property of people viewed as 'the enemy'. This unquestioning obedience to do harm ought to be interrogated at all levels if the youth are to redeem themselves and craft a more humane and caring nation. In other words, youth-driven and focused peace and justice initiatives must start from an inquiry of the self; a broadening and deepening of self-knowledge. In doing so, the initiatives will come to the realization that solutions to the challenges communities face can be found 'within' and 'without'. They are

found through increased dialogue, bridge building and conscious problem solving efforts. They are located in an intercultural space.

The betrayal

The political class that took power at independence betrayed the dream of the nationalist struggle. Devoid of any commitment to social justice, the elite could not come up with policies and sustainable programs to build national infrastructure and eradicate disease, ignorance and poverty. They resorted to ethnic nationalism to consolidate their power. In the words of Bujra (2005:20):

“The nation-building project was the first casualty because it was replaced by ethnicity as a primary unit for mobilizing political support and for using public resources to improve, in the ethnic areas of those in power, the infrastructure, economic investment, education and health services.”

This ethnic insularity continues even as Kenya celebrates fifty years of independence in 2013. The political and economic elite, while privately doing business together, encourages inter-ethnic tensions in order to complicate and undermine political organizing on the basis of class. As a result, most conflicts in Africa, though related to the struggle for resources, are driven ethnically.

The difficulties that came with the nationalist project of the 1960s led the youth to lose their status as the ‘national hope’ and lifeline. Their needs were not prioritized. Hence, educational institutions, health facilities and recreational centres deteriorated and more and more young people found their way into the streets, garbage dumps and the underworld. Because they are excluded from the arenas of power, health maintenance, relaxation and intellectual pursuits, the youth have had to construct alternative spaces of socialization and to redefine themselves as simultaneously as victims and agents and to adopt a posture of defiance (Mamadou Diof, 2003:5). Further, most have become actors in a performance orchestrated by globalization and its instruments. Youth participate in engaging and, where possible, uprooting the symbols of postcolonial munificence. They carry with them media images and attitudes especially from the entertainment industry of the African diaspora as they search for an identity different from that assigned by the nationalist project. The search is, however, neither coordinated, nor systematic. It is not ideologically driven because it is not based on reflection, inquiry or dialogue. If the youth in Africa are to search for an alternative direction for the continent they must participate in knowledge creation through reflection.

Presence

Mark Gerzon (2006) invokes two important concepts important for all youth in Africa: namely, 'presence' and 'global leadership.' To be 'present' is to be fully conscious, mentally and physically, in order to be able to undertake the task at hand. 'Presence' is a key ingredient in bringing about social change because it requires the total engagement of individuals and communities through a clear understanding of the issues at stake and what it would take to resolve them. Global leadership, on the other hand, is to step out of polarities and to engage in an understanding of other positions and viewpoints. It is to see value in the most unlikely spaces and to see the 'whole'. Global leadership requires that we reexamine the prevailing tendency to polarize the world by rebuilding trust in our collective humanity and anchoring tolerance of other viewpoints and interpretations. It requires that we see value in things that are good not just for ourselves but also for others. This is the calling that is being made with reference to the youth in Africa: that they need to be fully 'present' and to transcend those things that seek to limit their potentiality. These actions are deliberate, conscious and consistent; they cannot be incidental if they are to make a difference. If the youth in Africa are to contribute in pushing the continent forward in the 21st Century they will need to be fully conscious of their historical responsibility and to identify areas in which they can make meaningful interventions. They would need to think globally but act locally; to reach out to the continent and embrace the spirit of Pan-Africanism. Youth should refuse to be constrained by narrow considerations of clan and ethnicity.

Reaching out to the continent

The spirit of Pan-Africanism espoused by Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Julius Nyerere and other leaders of decolonization in Africa is gaining new impetus under the auspices of the African Union and its various instruments including the Pan-African Parliament, NEPAD and Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). There are also a number of Pan-African research institutions, such as the Association of Public Administration and Management (APAM), the Council of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA), the African Association of Political Scientists (AAPS), among others, which are involved in generating and disseminating knowledge. Youth-driven outlets for a re-conceptualization of Pan-African leadership have been mushrooming within the continent and a discourse of greater solidarity between African nation-states is in vogue. Unfortunately, the political class, which has significantly

contributed in the disintegration of the continent, has been given a major role to play in emerging Pan African institutions, as well as in the process of concretizing this envisaged integration and solidification of African concerns and interests. In spite of this situation, the new continental solidarity and spirit of rebirth does provide an opportunity for African leaders, within and without the political sphere, to reconsider their role in the economic and social development of their countries. Just like in the process of decolonization, African unity could be mobilized to push the continent's economic and social agenda. But for that to happen the youth ought to occupy their rightful place in the current pan-African discourse. As the 'continental hope' they need to pay particular attention to good governance as well as other challenges facing the continent.

When addressing the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Pan-African Parliament on 13th November 2006 in Midrand, South Africa, His Excellency Nelson Mandela reflected on the importance of good governance for democracy and economic prosperity to take root. He celebrated the birth of the African Union, NEPAD, Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the Pan-African Parliament and said:

"The future and deepening of real democracy in our continent rests firmly on the pillars of good governance. I am, therefore, happy that African countries have recommitted themselves to these ideals of democracy, good governance and economic prosperity for our peoples. Too many lives were sacrificed in the liberation struggle across Africa for us not to ensure that we create transparent and accountable systems of government on all levels... Poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, lack of shelter and clean water and HIV/AIDS remain some of the biggest challenges confronting our continent. (*Mandela Speech to Pan African Parliament, Midrand, 13 Nov. 2006*, p. 1-2)

The presence of an energetic and youthful population in Africa does point to an opportunity for the continent to resolve some of its most pressing challenges. But for the youth to play their role to completion, they must be fully "present" to the tasks that face the continent and be committed and courageous enough to engage the problems selflessly. They will need to be crusaders on a liberating mission.

We recognize that the youth themselves are not homogenous; they are shaped by the political, economic, cultural and social contexts in which they find themselves. They have a wide range of contradictions some of which are a consequence of the individualism, materialism and decadence perpetuated by

Western media. They cannot undertake the task of transforming their communities if they allow themselves to be driven by forces that seek to tear the continent apart. This situation can be reversed and the youth can become genuine engines of change in Africa if they engage in internal and external inquiry. They must become ‘seekers’ of knowledge about themselves and the destiny of the downtrodden, so well exemplified by the Ghanaian novelist Ayi Kwei Armah in *The Healers*. Through systematic inquiry, they will be able to question political trends in Africa. In doing so, they will also pave the way for the growth of a more visionary and responsive leadership in Africa.

Without doubt, youth can play a major role in reenergizing the continent through their creativity and ability to adjust to new situations. But it would be necessary for spaces to be deliberately set aside for intergenerational dialogue so that the wisdom of the past and the ingenuity of the present can be mobilized for the political, economic, social and technological advancement of Africa. Considering that younger people can be more inventive and daring in their activities, they need support and resources so that they can harness information, science and technology in the service of Africa. Given their ability to navigate new information technologies and to venture into new spaces, the youth in Africa can breathe new life into the continent. But they need to be fully present: *to be awake to the realities of the contemporary world and to see their role in social change*. They can redefine their countries and Africa at large in the eyes of communities as well as in the eyes of others. Moreover, they need to ‘know themselves’ and see themselves as part of the solution. They need to be global and have particular interest in the continent and, like the youth in India who are using knowledge and advances in Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) admirably, extract the best from the West and East for the benefit of the African people. As the youth reach out to other domains, it is equally critical that African households, communities and governments invest in them and give them the confidence they need to bring about much needed social change.

Working through civil society

The term ‘civil society’ is used generally in reference to a heterogeneous range of formal as well as informal organizations which occupy a space as non-state and non-profit making actors. Whereas the formal organizations are visible and legally recognized – foreign and indigenous NGOs, business groups, trade unions, and community based organizations – the informal ones are made of

alliances that are less visible and may be based on gender, age and kinship. There is no doubt that it is within civil society that the youth can initially situate themselves most effectively in order to bring meaningful change at the community level before venturing into national elective politics, if that is a desired goal. But what is civil society' in the African context? As suggested above, the term civil society' is used in a variety of ways but principally to refer to the presence of social actors and new patterns of political participation outside of formal state structures and institutions. Civil society provides possibilities of economic and social development not significantly linked with the state or governing elite. However, it is not necessarily de-linked from its influences, contradictions and aspirations. The term has certain historical connotations in Western political thought, notably in the writings of John Locke and John Stuart Mill. In the Western tradition it is rooted in ideals of citizenship under law; in freedom of speech; in the protection of minority rights within the context of majority rule. Moreover, it is linked to the differentiation between public and private interests and the emergence of the bourgeoisie. In the 1780s, prior to the French Revolution, concepts related to social and political change were floated in intellectual, scientific and literary salons and coffee houses in France. Civil society grew out of a response to monarchical and semi feudal structures and institutions which treated the political space as if it was the private property of the monarchy. In Europe, patrimonial rule was challenged through a popularization of the notion that political authorities ought to be held accountable to the public. Social groups sought to curve a public arena in order to interrogate the operations of the state and its organs. 17th and 18th century thinkers, such as contract theorists, developed concepts and limitations of civil society currently in use such as 'internationality.' To transcend the vicissitudes of the 'state of nature', Thomas Hobbes and John Locke propagated the view that people set out laws to govern relations of power. Locke went on to argue that national power resides in the individuals making up civil society – those who give power to others to govern them and power is given so long as the governors use it to fulfill the protective function. But this power is not absolute because the governed have residual power which they can use to challenge the governors.

Taking the discussion forward, Antonio Gramsci argued that civil society is the arena in which class and national identities are formed and is indicative of the struggles over the imposition of norms and economic interests. For Gramsci, 'hegemony' suggests the attempts of the dominant class to use its political, moral and intellectual leadership to establish its values, systems and

view of the world as all-inclusive and universal, and to shape the interests and needs of sub-ordinate groups so that domination is viewed as consensual. Because the dominant class does not maintain its hold solely through the use of the state machinery but also through mediating institutions, a critical way of undermining the ruling class is the development of a counter-hegemonic position through mediating institutions. This view by Gramsci points to the importance of social associations in shaping and directing societal norms.

In Africa, the emergence of a social space separate from the state and kinship groupings is related to the process of urbanization during the colonial era. Voluntary associations grew out of the needs and demands of the new migrants. There were ethnic, cultural, class and intellectual associations in the emerging urban areas. African intellectuals rooted in their communities and working together with Asian migrants and sympathetic missionaries played a key role in providing a normative framework for associational politics before independence. They mobilized against colonialism and created an alternative vision of a post-colonial state distinct from that envisaged by the colonial onslaught. The youth were key in that venture.

The associational activity of the 1920s and 1930s in Africa provided the critical foundation for the growth of nationalist parties of the 1940s and 1950s. Unfortunately, the instruments that made colonial domination possible were not dismantled during the struggle for independence and there was no real change for ordinary people when colonial rule was brought down. The state continued being “totalistic in scope, constituting a statist economy. It presented itself as an apparatus of violence, had a narrow social base, and relied for compliance on coercion rather than authority” (Ake 1996:3). The political class used the state to consolidate its hold on power and civil society, in countries such as Kenya, was forced to reorganize in order to deal with the emerging dictatorship. Indeed, with the rise of the one party state around the 1970s, the trans-ethnic associations (trade unions, women’s movement, youth groups) key to national integration, were targeted by the ruling class. Thus in Africa, civil society, be it formal or informal, has sought to challenge power and to agitate on behalf of the people.

Communities in post-colonial Africa have been looking up to the youth and intellectuals to once again provide leadership against political and economic oppression. In Uganda, the youth and intellectuals were key to the removal of Idi Amin Dada. When Amin took power in the 1971 coup he was internally supported by the coalition of traders, southern kulaks, and the Catholic petty bourgeoisie. That was the social base that he was later to consolidate with the

expulsion of the Asian commercial and petty bourgeoisie. But these were not the only supporters. Externally, the British and the Israelis were the first supporters of Amin's 1971 coup because they were unhappy with Milton Obote. Obote had broken relations with Britain over the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and had moved ahead to mobilize towards the formation of a 'progressive block' at the 1971 Singapore Commonwealth Conference. That soured relations between Britain and Uganda (Mamdani 1982:129). But the students consistently opposed the dictatorship of Idi Amin.

In neighbouring Kenya, whereas the Asian business community and Britain supported the reign of Daniel Arap Moi, students and intellectuals stood up to him to agitate for multiparty democracy. According to Mamdani, this role is historical. Mamdani says:

In the history of revolutions, students have often acted as the catalysts of a movement. On the one hand, having no articulate class interests, on the other, threatened by unemployment and an adverse economic situation once they complete their studies, the radicalization of student action is rapid. Their political significance, however, is defined by the demands they advance and the classes with which they objectively ally (1982:131).

In Kenya, universities took up the task especially in the 1970s and 1980s to challenge state excesses as manifested in corrupt practices, assassinations and denial of freedom of expression. They were also key in the pursuit of a people driven constitutional dispensation. Amutabi (2002:158-159) delineates five situations to show that student activism has been informed generally by a democratic agenda. First, they have resisted the presence of state agents in universities. Second, their demands have included freedom of assembly, speech and association. Three, they have questioned governance of universities as students seek more representation in management committees. Four, they have galvanized the country in contesting national policies such as Structural Adjustment Programmes. Five, they have stood alongside critics of government. The University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University have especially been visible in keeping the political elite on its toes and their activities have in the past led to arrests, the deregistration of student bodies and the blacklisting of academic staff unions. It cannot be contested that despite the lack of strategy and ideological direction, students in Kenya, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, pushed the democratic agenda forward. This positive contribution is often destroyed by the occasional acts of thuggery, stoning of motorists and the destruction of property that accompany student demonstrations. Also there

has not been unity of purpose and on many occasions in the past the state has infiltrated the university, detained lecturers and expelled 'rebellious' students.

Universities have not acted alone in democratic pursuits because religious organizations, workers unions, pressure groups, farmers cooperatives, and the media have also created the space needed to argue the case for democracy and good governance. Despite these efforts, the solid leadership exemplified by African youth and intellectuals during the colonial era in mobilizing and shaping public opinion has not in reality been replicated in the post colonial phase. They have not given communities original conceptual tools to transform their political and economic situation. Except for a few isolated cases in which positions have been taken against abuse of power, the excess of state instruments and misappropriation of public resources by the ruling classes, African intellectuals of the post-independence era have generally tended to be opportunistic and half-hearted in providing direction to the masses. In certain cases, they have provided the fodder for dictatorships to flourish.

Mazrui in an article titled '*Academics Have been Advocates of Major Changes in East Africa*' (Sunday Nation September 03, 2006 p.13), argues that academics in post-colonial Africa have contributed to political but not economic changes. Young African intellectuals, linked to the needs of their society and reaching out beyond their borders, were key to the process of decolonization and were connected to the pursuit of freedom for the majority. Mazrui says:

The speed of political decolonization of the three East African countries was spectacular but the second phase of nation building was truly in fits and starts. Previously because African intellectuals and academics could not come to grips with viable strategies of economic development, nation building was difficult to sustain in the post colonial era.

Why did the young postcolonial leaders not provide guidance for economic recovery? Among other reasons, they cut links with the societies which had given them the task of transforming their countries at the onset of independence and succumbed to the trappings of power. Instead of serving their societies, they used the new opportunities to accumulate personal wealth and perpetuate a culture of patronage. Others were caught in the Cold War battles between Marxism and capitalism, paying little attention to the role of context-specific trends in production, technology, and culture in social transformation. Home grown political and economic solutions were not given the chance to blossom, individual creativity was muzzled and there was no deliberate effort to carve a niche for the emergence of more youthful leadership that would propel the

continent forward. Dissidence was criminalized and governance was personalized and ethnicized. Peter Kagwanja (2000: 30-31) captures this scenario as follows:

From the early 1970s, the African hegemonial elite grew increasingly autarchic, undemocratic and repressive. In turn, African intellectuals became vocal critics of the authoritarian tendencies and misconceived policies of the ruling elite. The latter responded by severely restricting academic freedom, expulsion, detention, and even liquidation of intellectuals. This brought the era of cooperation and interface between academics and the state to an end. The widespread adoption of SAPs by African governments from the mid 1970s brought the problem of barren interface to a head and policy dependence to its acme. The World Bank's claim to superiority of its knowledge over that of the African thinkers and the acceptance of this claim by African policy makers opened the floodgates for the marginalization of indigenous knowledge in favour of externally formulated policy frameworks.

By maintaining a repressive labour regime in the universities and research institutions, the African-elite managed to pay scandalous wages to the academics and other professionals without any fear of facing industrial action. In this regard, the state's action of keeping down intellectual labour costs by fostering repressive labour regimes was not different from the general objectives of multinational corporations in the Third World economies. Cuts in educational budgets, particularly university funding, as a result of pressure from the World Bank, devastatingly undermined the productivity of intellectuals and starved universities of resources to undertake research. Moreover, spiraling inflation and devaluation of the national currencies increased costs of foods, school fees, medical services and so on. The hardships created by SAPs set in motion the twin process of *pauperisation* and *proletarianisation* of academics.

Despite these setbacks, some workers, small scale farmers, students and intellectuals have over the years played an important role in criticizing the ruling class and have brought to the fore the issue of human rights and the need to increase public participation in national issues and to limit personalized rule. Equally, certain faith based organizations have taken positions at variance with the state and defended the rights of citizens to express themselves freely. On occasion, faith based organizations have tried to present themselves as encapsulating an identity that is acceptable to the African people through indigenization of its structures and the development of a metalanguage for democracy in Africa. But ethnicity and an unarticulated economic direction

continue to challenge the continent. There are gaping inequalities between regions and socio-economic classes. In the urban areas, the economic elite is defined by a lifestyle incomprehensible in a continent that continues to suffer starvation and poor health. How does one articulate the economic differentiation and engage the particularism of ethnicity, constantly manipulated by the ruling class? Interestingly, most progressive civil society organizations are pushing for liberal democracy in a continent already replete with gross socio-economic inequalities and lacking in the conditions that existed in Europe and USA at the onset of liberal democracy. Alternative models of political and economic organizing that pay particular attention to rural areas as well as cultural and ethno-linguistic diversities have not been sufficiently investigated. This is an area that youth leadership can explore; first, at the level of civil society and later in national politics.

An important function that leadership in civil society organizations can undertake is the creation of norms that address ethnic particularism in politics and inject a new search for creativity in knowledge at all levels. In the case of Kenya, 'the institutional expression of multiparty politics, whether in terms of political party formation or informal political alliance and lobbying, expresses itself purely on ethnic lines' (Omollo 2002:217). Political parties organize around patron-client relations. Civil society can change this though it is not immune to schisms and the challenges of ethnicity in the larger society which serves to weaken its solidarity as change agents. Quite often, civil society groupings, when not serving the interests of personalities and ethnicities, are too conscious of donor interests to be innovative and daring. In the process because oppositional civil society is non-autonomous and listens too closely to promptings from external funding agencies and foreign interests, it tends to compromise principles that would guide the nation. Moreover, the patrimonial state has the resources and ability to compromise pockets of civil society by penetrating them and using them to advantage. These situations have served to weaken reflection and inquiry in civil society leadership as it waits for external guidance on crucial national issues. Again, youth leadership can break from this tendency.

Relationship with the North

But the youth would also need to reflect on the relationship between Africa and Western countries especially in resource management and knowledge creation. Is there a way in which they could extract knowledge from the North

for the benefit of the African continent? Instead of engaging in external trade which is, in any case, skewed to the benefit of the West, can they strategically extract technological knowledge and then domesticate it? In the recent years, the social, economic and political challenges facing Africa have led to unprecedented urge to migrate to the North in search of education and more opportunities; a situation neatly captured by the Zanzibar writer Said Ahmed Mohamed in his Kiswahili novel *Dunia Yao* ("Their World"). In that novel, the cultural ramifications of globalization are enunciated and interrogated. What does a parent do when, over dinner and for the first time, the daughter excitedly announces that she is off to Britain the following morning to run away from the squalor of her neighborhood? He is left wondering how she had kept the secret of a passport and visa to herself and to marvel at the absence of intergenerational dialogue.

Nonetheless, there are signs that the migration to the North, while denying the continent skilled people and intellectuals, is beneficial, to a degree, through repatriation of financial support to families. But again this 'brain gain' is random and not well thought out due to a number of factors including the 'non-registered' status of Africans in the diaspora and weak governance structures on the continent. It is also not sustainable. A deliberate technological transfer in which African youth are facilitated to become the key players in industrializing the continent might be the way out. This is because the youth are inventive and inventiveness is key, as is borrowing of technology. To paraphrase Rodney (1976:115), 'when a society for whatever reason finds itself technologically trailing behind others, it catches up not so much by independent inventions but by borrowing.' That is what Japan did. It borrowed effectively from Europe and domesticated it. Because the Japanese were not enslaved or colonized, they had the independence of mind and a cultural base on which to situate their development. In Kenya, the *jua kali* informal sector, driven by the youth, is an important engine of development. Though curtailed by limited sources of energy and capital, Kenya's small industries are sources of employment and have the potential of making the country industrialize. The *jua kali* sector is evidence that the youth can play a major role in creating new knowledge and direction for Africa by interrogating the reasons for the continent's current sorry state. They would need to passionately and diligently study the cultural terrain in which they are working, mobilize their potential and link it with global events. It is their historical responsibility to do so.

There is little doubt that the youth and intellectuals in Kenya are contributing to the democratization of the country, albeit at a slow pace and

with, at times, prompting from donor agencies. There is indeed sufficient evidence that if well directed, the youth in civil society can contribute significantly in bringing about social change in Africa. We are witnesses to the collapse of dictatorships and the emergence of more open societies made possible by internal and external forces. In Kenya since the 2003, there has been an aura of economic revival, despite the difficulties of the present moment whose foundation may be located in the misrule of the last forty years and the endemic nature of corruption among the political and economic elite.

Without doubt, there are changes that can be accelerated if given proper institutional frameworks. Within the context of family and household, we have witnessed changes in gender roles and responsibility, as well as the interrogation and the reconstruction of femininity and masculinity. Spaces and responsibilities that were exclusively female dominated are being occupied by males and vice versa. Ancient assumptions have been questioned and at times subverted. The distinction between the private and public spheres has been blurred and boundaries of desires and expectations have been enlarged. Money lending institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) are using the carrot and the stick to demand that governments liberalize their operations, embrace the free market economy, reduce public sector workforce and become more open in the conduct of national financial affairs. At the level of the state, consolidation of institutional and political processes, including the review of national constitutions and multi-party elections has been emphasized. The youth have come to be viewed as key players capable of bringing sustainable change in Africa and music and performing arts are being used to speak back at authority. Youth dominated political parties are emerging through the identity of 'youthfulness.' There is a growing interest in youth in the economic and political spheres, even if this interest does not translate into real, tangible and deliberate involvement of younger people in national politics.

This growing interest in youth is propelled by a number of factors. First, they constitute the majority in most African countries and are affecting and shaping political, economic, social and cultural processes in fundamental ways. Second, they are situated between the local and the global. On the one hand, the majority are brought up by parents who have a base in the rural areas and who would like to impart age old values that have held their communities together. To do so, they invoke memory and occasional trips to their rural homes. On the other hand, though, globalization is challenging local knowledge and memory and bringing into play, through a range of aggressive media outlets,

a culture significantly associated with the West. The 'new' culture is presented as 'non-local' and 'non-national,' despite leaning towards a value system that is significantly American.

This tension has had huge implications for the youth: their belief systems, aesthetics, social relations, economic activities and political engagements. The youth, especially from the urban areas, are seen as the possible instruments of change in Africa because they are linked to universal discourses of human rights while still connected to their cultures, even if superficially. But this new position which is being claimed by the youth is also seen as threatening. Among other things, a discomfort exists in the way they use their bodies and languages to express feelings, pleasures and sexuality as well as to respond to authority. The youth in Africa are redefining identity through a flattening of style that traverses ethno-linguistic borders and are refashioning identity and group membership. Indeed, through movement, dress and language they are setting conditions for inclusion and exclusion. These changes have implications on the way we do leadership related work in Africa.

The cultural dimension to development

Youth can mobilize social transformation through culture; a human communicative expression that shapes lives and interactions. Although often viewed as ethnographic, culture is more than 'what is received from the past'. It is a dynamic process always subjected to modifications due to changes in the larger society. According to Mensah (2006: 65):

Like globalization, culture is a nested, heterogeneous, phenomenon, characterized by change and instability. Indeed, the notion of a pure, stable or static culture is theoretically unsustainable especially in this era of globalization.

Culture is essentially dialogic, if not 'plurilogic' (Njogu, 2004), heterogeneous, and hybrid. It is not singular or geographically bounded -given its process of coming into being as a product of internal and external forces. Youth leadership cannot take culture, of whatever form, for granted. They can learn from it and also use it as a process to bring about social change. We know that when the missionaries came to Africa they found a large body of knowledge. Among the Luo of Kenya, for example, there existed knowledge systems (*rieko*), which were metaphysical (*Jok*) and epistemological (*piny*) with a developmental trajectory (*dongruok*). Again, the pursuit of freedom (*wiyathi*) among the Gikuyu people was rooted the fundamental right to be fully human

by being free; to be ‘oneself’. In Southern Africa the concept of *ubuntu* (collective humanity) propelled the liberation struggle against foreign domination. It is no wonder that the youth in Africa played a key role in questioning the colonial project and agitating for independence. The urge to be free was integral to their cultural heritage.

There have been cultural explanations to underdevelopment in Africa with constant comparisons between African countries and South East Asia. The causal explanations of the disparity are misleading on a number of grounds to which I briefly turn. One, the class structures between the newly independent African countries and Asian nations were different – Asia has had a larger business community for ages. The business class was able to mobilize resources and to “cross borders” in the generation of capital. It was familiar with the process and discipline of investment and production. Two, the politics were different with political leaders in South East Asia playing a leading role in supporting business-centered economic initiatives. The political class was distinct from the commercial bourgeoisie, unlike in most of Africa where the political class is *also* the economic elite. The integration of political interests in economic pursuits by the ruling clique in Africa did not augur well to the growth of business. Three, the relationship between countries such as Korea and Japan as well as the United States made a big difference. Africa was a playground of global politics but was never a beneficiary of the tensions wrought by the Cold war. Four, the levels of literacy in South East Asia were much higher than in African countries where higher education system at independence was negligible. We know that with literacy comes better planning and management of resources. Recall that the whole of East Africa had one university at independence, namely Makerere University established belatedly in 1949. This meant that intellectual community that would generate ideas and engage the rest of the world was very small. Five, the cultural onslaught by colonialism in Africa removed the critical base around which discipline, productivity and knowledge generation could be grounded. These matters are important because without understanding the historicity of our current situation we may lose the confidence we need to move forward. I believe that culture does play a role in development within the context of social, political, and economic influences. Indeed:

“If cultural issues are taken into account, among others, in a fuller accounting of societal change, they can greatly help to broaden our understanding of the world, including the process of development and the nature of identity... Once we dissociate culture from the illusion of destiny, it can help to provide a

better understanding of social change when placed together with other influences and interactive social processes.” (Amartya Sen 2006:108).

Thus, without adopting a romantic view of the past, it may be important to reexamine it so that we can learn from it. Admittedly, there have been cultural practices that have curtailed our abilities to move forward in reaching our human potential but it is not true that our cultures are necessarily a hindrance to development. They are, in fact, a resource that, properly utilized, can provide opportunities available for all to enjoy the rights to health, education, shelter and food.

At the onset of independence, the youth seemed to play two key roles: first, as bridges between the past and the present and secondly, as instruments of political and economic change. If the colonial experience had led to a state of alienation and loss, independence was seen as an opportunity to revive and restore lost identities. The youth were expected to play a major role in this restoration. But the old guard did not give way when they were supposed to do so due to constitutional weaknesses or the sheer love for power and privilege. Could the transition have been anticipated by culture?

In *Facing Mount Kenya* ([1938] 1978), Kenyatta shows that nations can put in place constitutional mechanism to ensure that one generation hands over power to another; and that the youth can, on behalf of the people, wrest power from unwilling dictatorships. He narrates how Gikuyu, the tyrannical ruler of Gikuyuland and grandchild of the elder daughter of the founder of the ethnic group, mobilized all young people to join his army and did not allow dissenting views on his style of leadership. Efforts by the people to change his approach to governance were thwarted and in desperation the *iregi* (revolutionary) generation revolted against him. This action by the *iregi* generation facilitated the shift by the Gikuyu people from being nomads to being agriculturalists. The generation that started cultivation was referred to as *ndemi* (cutters). The replacement of Gikuyu government, through the *ituika* (disconnecting) revolution paved the way for a democratic rule and broad public participation. The *Ituika* revolution transferred Gikuyuland from a dictatorship to a democracy and power was constitutionally expected to rotate between the *Mwangi* and *Maina* (or *Irungu*) age groups.

It was decided that one generation would hold power for a limited period of time at the end of which the ceremony of *Ituika* would be held to declare that the old generation had completed its term of governing. The *Ituika* was a generational and ideological rupture with the past and an ushering in of

generational newness through ritual and ceremony. This constitution, which paved the way for collective leadership, was drafted by the *Njama ya Ituika* (the Revolutionary Council) and presented to the general population for approval and endorsement. The last great *ituika* was held about 1890-98 and the Mwangi generation was given power by the people to govern according to the Gikuyu constitution and transitional mechanism. In 1925 the Maina (Irungu) generation started preparing themselves to take over from the Mwangi generation but their songs and dances were declared illegal by the British government. According to Kenyatta:

From the *ndemi* generation onwards the principles of democratic government, as laid down by the first *ituika*, continued to function favourably until it was smashed by the British government, who introduced a system of government very similar to the autocratic government which the Gikuyu people had discarded many centuries ago (1978:195-6).

In most of Africa, the pre-Independence generation has held on to power for over four decades, giving no room to the youth to bring in innovations. It is quite possible that the inability of the older generation to hand over power to the younger generation is a consequence of the colonial experience which was dictatorial in nature. A solution for the current dilemma of governance in Africa may be resolved through a deliberate and rigorous examination of the past. Equally, the past may offer a solution to the collapse of values related to integrity and accountability among leaders. We say this despite our recognition of the limitations of that past as well as some of its institutions and practices. The reexamination should not be viewed as an uncritical endorsement of the past but, rather, as an attempt to pick the best from yesteryears and to modify it and inject it with the content and rhythm of the present. History can be used to understand and restructure the present.

Youth as peace makers

We know that politically motivated violence in Kenya flares around election time and is orchestrated by ethnically bound politicians. Why does this happen? Human Rights Watch (2002:116) states:

Electoral politics in Kenya are split along ethnic lines, pitting ethnic groups against each other in a competition for power and resources. Kenya's history of politically motivated violence targeting particular groups clearly suggests tactics political opportunists can emulate to achieve similar results, which they are all

the more likely to pursue since the masterminds of past attacks have enjoyed impunity for their actions. Violence has been used so often for political ends and without accountability that it is at risk of being seen as a legitimate means of political discourse. The reliance on violence and the targeting of victims along ethnic lines, when combined with the increased availability of small arms, makes for an ever more dangerous mix. Those who have been the targets of past attacks have resented the suffering of their community and have reacted to fears about the future by increasingly seeking self-protection through the acquisition of more sophisticated weapons. This growing militarization and fear of other groups raises the possibility that ethnic violence in Kenya might be triggered easily and spread rapidly, with devastating results.

A youth focused leadership can say ‘No’ to this manipulation. The Constitution of Kenya, promulgated on August 27, 2010 provides a major opportunity for youth to drive change in Kenya.

According to the findings of the Kenya’s Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence (PEV) under the chairmanship of Judge Philip Waki (2008), the violence may be understood from five angles:

(a) *The growing politicization and proliferation of violence.* Over the years politicians, have used violence in order to attain or retain power. Quite often, Kenyans have tolerated the violent resolution of political disagreements, including within the municipal councils and parliament. It is taken for granted that every politician has to have a gang of youths that acts on his or her behalf and this may explain why unlike in other East African nations, few women venture into elective politics. Kenyans almost always ‘expect’ their politicians to be violent. Moreover, because politics is organized around ethnic solidarities, perpetrators of violence are hardly punished and this has led to a culture of impunity. Hence:

“...violence has become a factor not just of elections but in everyday life. What this means in practice is that violence is widespread and can be tapped for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to win elections.” (Waki Report p. 24)

(b) *Growing power and personalization of power around the presidency.* The impact of this is that communities feel that they need the presidency in order to access state resources. It has also led to undermining the legitimacy of oversight institutions such as parliament and the judiciary that could check abuses of power and corruption and ensure accountability.

- (c) *There has been a feeling among certain communities of historical marginalization resulting from perceptions of inequities in the allocation of land and other national resources.* This feeling has been used by the political elite to mobilize support and create tension and hate among other communities, perceived to have benefitted from access to political power.
- (d) *There is a growing population of poor, unemployed youth who, lacking any social opportunities, join militia and organized gangs, some protected within government and the security forces.* The proliferation of militia and gangs has led to institutionalized violence. These gangs sell their services of violence on a willing buyer willing seller basis.

Stated differently, lack of social opportunities over the last four decades or so has created frustration and anger among the youth who turn into crime and militia activities. In seeking to be part of a group, to belong and have an identity distinct from that of the masses, they have provided the muscle for a political elite bent on either acquiring or retaining power. This is not helped by the fact that many youth do not acquire higher education.

But where should the youth as peacemaker be located? The peacemaker seeks to stop a conflict and pursue justice in a state of calmness and therefore, the first responsibility of the youthful peacemaker is to calm the people; to bring temperatures down. When people are calm, they become mindful. Reflecting on mindfulness, in *Calming the Fearful Mind*, the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh says:

In the Buddhist tradition, we practice mindful breathing and mindful walking so that we can recognize, embrace, and transform our anger. Mindfulness can help us be aware of what is going on inside of us and around us. Anybody can be mindful. If you drink a cup of tea and you know that you are drinking a cup of tea, that is mindful drinking. If you breathe and you know that you are breathing in, that is mindful breathing. When you take a step and you are aware that you are making a step, that is mindful walking.” (p.12).

Many of us sleepwalk through life; we are not able to explore our inner selves. To be mindful is to be awake and present in body and mind; to be self aware in order to apply all our mental, emotional and spiritual resources to the situation which we face. In seeking mindfulness, presence and calmness, the peacemaker may be accused of undervaluing justice and the needs of the other. Yet justice is an integral part of peace, because only with justice does sustainable peace become possible. The second responsibility is to seek to understand the source of pain and suffering of the other; to understand the other's position so that dialogue

accompanied by deep and compassionate listening can take place. When we listen to many voices in Kenya, we learn that local tensions and conflict are propelled by local agendas, including personal grudges, jealousies, individual fights, and antagonism over resources and power. Some of the conflicts go unnoticed by the media and do not seem to upset power at the center. When local dynamics interact with national causes of violence such as weaknesses in the governance institutions – the electoral commission, security agents, the judiciary and so on – they can be extremely catastrophic. Surely, local conflict is not just a localized manifestation of central cleavage: there is immense local input and initiative in the production of violence. There is a sense in which local and national tensions converge to unsettle local processes. Evidently, this happens through two mechanisms: *cleavage and alliance* (Autesserve 2006). Whereas ‘cleavage’ refers to the ‘overarching issue dimension’ – ideology, ethnicity, religion, class -linking actors at the centre with those at the grassroots, ‘alliance’ links central actors pursuit for national power to the local actors need for local benefit. The convergence of these two processes could unleash the type of violence that Kenya experienced in 2007/2008. Moreover, the processes can receive input from other interests, regional or international. If our generalization is correct, then it follows that the pursuit of peace and justice must of necessity draw from regional, national and local actors and issues.

It will be recalled that the distrust between the NARC partners after the 2002 elections and in the build up to the 2005 referendum ensured that the government did not work as a team to manage the transition and factions competed against each other to entrench themselves and their interests among the citizenry. The hostilities among national leaders led to detrimental local consequences – and this was not helped by the lack of professionalism at the Electoral Commission of Kenya, the security agents and the media. Through media outlets, the political elite and their advisors used language that was immensely polarizing. Slogans such as ‘41 Against 1’ were used and had the effect of essentializing and presenting communities as enemies, notwithstanding the role played by members of all communities in the pursuit of democracy, peace and justice in the country. Equally, the use of security organs and governance institutions by the state to muzzle alternative views and affiliations had the effect of further drawing communities apart. Peacemakers must engage national leaders and demand the use of language that is sensitive to ethnic difference and insist on accountable and transparent use of public institutions by the state.

As we have seen, there is inspired leadership among the youth in Kenya; a leadership driven not by embracing their own particular 'part' but by the 'whole'. They are developing 'third side values'; values that transcend our own interests. This leadership is not just national; it is transnational. During the post election violence, youthful Kenyans in the diaspora worked hard to get the post-election violence story out. Ory Okolloh, David Kobia and Erik Hersman pulled their knowledge together to create *www.usahidi.com* by combining Google Maps, which allows users to zoom in and view satellite images of Kenya, with a tool for users, via mobile phone or internet browser, to report incidences of violence on the map, add photos, video, and written content that document where and when violence occurs. The *www.usahidi.com* was created to provide comprehensive reports of what was happening in Kenya with direct information from those who were affected where murder, riots, looting, rape and other forms of violence were taking place. Moreover, youthful Kenyan bloggers were instrumental in sending out stories, especially when live broadcasts were banned. Radio broadcasters started relying in bloggers for information. Mobile phones were used to circulate pictures outside mainstream media and mass SMS went out across the globe. Many Kenyans in the diasporas appeared on radio and television to explain the crisis to the world and to urge that the country be salvaged. Considering the huge remittances from the diasporas, it is important that the perspectives of Kenyans living on peace, justice and reconciliation abroad be considered and integrated into our national and community efforts.

Entrench intercultural and national identity

Much as we may seek to celebrate our ethnic particularity, we cannot run away from the fact that we are part of a mutually dependent whole, either within the nation-state or in the world. It is therefore imperative to entrench a vision that allows us to see things from the point of view of others and to be ready to compromise and seek common ground. This vision drawn from 'across our position' allows us to extend our identification horizon to other humans and the environment around us. In other words, we are not prisoners to local identities but are capable of operating at levels which are unconstrained by time and space to entrench relationships of solidarity with people with whom we share an intercultural philosophy. The view I am presenting is not meant to underestimate the poignancy of more local relationships of solidarity. Rather, it is to suggest that local identities such as articulated by ethnicity and race, though real and relevant in our lives, can be undervalued and transcended when other

forms of the self are affirmed. This is a position the intercultural peacemaker may want to consider. By breaking through the barriers of local boundaries and forms of identity, the intercultural peacemaker extends a hand of love to others and embraces them, despite their positioning. Mahatma Gandhi captures these values when he says “*whenever you are confronted with an opponent, conquer him with love. I have found that this law of love has answered as the law of destruction has never done.*” In other words, the intercultural peacemaker develops a compassionate heart in order to appreciate the suffering of others. Reflecting on the suffering of humanity, the Dalai Lama has observed:

“Looking around, I see that it is not only we Tibetan refugees, and members of other displaced communities, who face difficulties. Everywhere and in every society, people endure suffering and adversity even those who enjoy freedom and material prosperity. Indeed, it seems to me that much of the unhappiness we humans endure is actually of our own making. In principle, therefore, this is avoidable. I also see that, in general, those individuals whose conduct is ethically positive are happier and more satisfied than those who neglect ethics. This confirms my belief that if we can reorient our thoughts and emotions, and reorder our behavior, not only can we cope with suffering more easily, but we can prevent a great deal of it from arising in the first place.” (Zajonc, Arthur 2006:13 *We Speak as One: Twelve Nobel Laureates Share their Vision for Peace*)

One way of re-orienting our thoughts is by embarking on the nation building project which was postponed almost immediately after independence. This project, to be driven principally through our national language Kiswahili, by younger leaders will anchor UTU as the organizing idea and seek to create a society in which citizens can emotionally and intellectually identify themselves as Kenyans with a shared value system and destiny. This can be done at least in the following ways:

- (a) Foster a sense of national identity and belonging among Kenyans, especially the youth. Increase the visibility of national symbols, such as the national flag, the national language, the national motto and national anthem. Put in place mechanisms for the development of Kenya's national history.
- (b) Work out a socio-economic development program vigorously, equitably and responsibly to enhance the quality of life throughout the country in a manner that is sustainable. It is not enough to say “It's Our Turn to Eat”. We need to increase productivity, involve the diasporas and determine what we will ‘eat’ and from where it will come.

- (c) Promote inter-ethnic and inter-racial harmony and reduce prejudice and discrimination. The youth exchange programs, intermarriages, responsible journalism, inter-ethnic educational institutions, public broadcasting, conflict sensitive language and other measures aimed at cohesion and integration can be streamlined.
- (d) Entrench protection of human rights, justice and integrity in private and public life.
- (e) Nurture an open and transparent society and increase accountability among public servants. Take steps against corruption in all its forms. We can learn from the early 2003 actions by ordinary citizens to arrest the police.
- (f) Increase the safety and security for Kenyans. Reform security organs.
- (g) Increase the social and political space for the involvement of civil society so that many Kenyans can participate in governance at all levels.
- (h) Strengthen institutions of governance such as the judiciary so that they can arbitrate fairly.

Conclusion

The political culture inherited from the colonial experience needs to be purged. The colonial state redistributed resources, such as land, and determined relations and modes of production that would prevail in their spheres of influence. The development of infrastructure was guided by the interests of the state other than those of the people. It survived on cheap labour, at times forced, proletarianizing and atomizing Africa societies. Through its instruments of violence and coercion, it accumulated resources and demanded unquestioning loyalty. At the dawn of independence, national leaders inherited these instruments and institutions without concomitant normative, institutional or ideological mechanisms which could sufficiently constrain them against abuse of power. They became alienated from the broad masses of the people and used their newly acquired positions for the appropriation of personal wealth. In many countries, there were no deliberate efforts to involve the people in the development agenda. Instead, ethnicity and sectarianism were invoked to protect and perpetuate class interests and to keep a hold on power. The ethnicization of politics, coupled with the phenomenon of patronage, led to unequal access of basic needs and the enjoyment of fundamental rights of the masses. On occasion, exercising political dissent and showing solidarity with ordinary people

was interpreted as being ‘anti-development.’ Within the context of the Cold War, it was viewed as an effort to inscribe socialist ideology in Africa and this needed to be contained by all means possible. Creativity and the pursuit of political knowledge were criminalized.

There was no attention to the democratization of institutions of governance, management of the environment, rapid urbanization, decentralization of decision making, integrity in the performance of public duty, and the cultural integrity of each community, even as practices detrimental to the realization of human potential are interrogated, eradicated and revised. The spirit and dream of Pan-Africanism was set aside as national leaders sought to consolidate their power within their borders. If the youth in Africa are to redeem themselves, a new paradigm for the continent would need to pay particular attention to these matters. There is an urgent need for African countries to focus on growth, productivity, and discipline in public service and to look for ways to engage communities in determining the preferred direction of development. Leaders must regain the trust of communities, engage in dialogue with them, learn new ways of doing things and believe in our ability to bring social transformation. They ought to cooperate with each other on matters of trade, commerce, the sharing of information and technology and the provision of health care, safe water and food. This development paradigm calls for ‘people-centeredness’ in perspective and action. It is a call for a re-definition of what really matters in the lives of people so that they can live fully and share in the benefits of science and technology. This integrated and comprehensive view of development will, of necessity, draw from indigenous knowledge systems and contextualize them within the contemporary world. Given the adaptive capacity of cultures, this redeeming experience need not be too difficult to fathom. There is a lot that the creativity of the youth, now and in the past, can teach us.

Maybe by looking deeply into our cultures and listening to the voices of the past, we may start opening up opportunities for the youth to take leadership roles and responsibilities because cultures provide the ground on which a nation can stand. Cultures that are receptive to other voices can open possibilities for people-centred development because they encourage consultation and consensus building. The circle around which the Council of Elders sat to deliberate epitomised a unity of purpose and vision; a continuity of cooperative engagement. To be a member of the circle was to accept that one’s ideas were not the only possible ones and that they found completion through dialogue and consultation. The Circle needs to be brought back into contemporary leadership.

We have seen that the youth have a major role to play in shaping the political, economic and social direction of Africa. In the case of Kenya, that role is taking shape especially within civil society. But it has become critical that we examine how the various strands of cultures shape the type of leadership we espouse and experience, including the ways in which leaders located outside of conventional politics are transforming lives through committed and selfless service to the people. The shared and distributed leadership, as well as the transitional mechanisms and systems of transferring authority from one generation to another practiced by communities may, in fact, be the basis on which to build a new governance and leadership ethos in Africa. A deliberate and systematic engagement with communities, where we are keen learners, may offer a way out of the uninspiring national leadership styles and the politics of patronage that dominate the continent and perpetuated by the colonial experience. The youth can take this as one of their tasks.

In addition, the youth can play a role in bringing peace in war torn areas by refusing to be manipulated by the political class and business elite. Peace and security allow for citizens to exercise their various freedoms, unfettered. Unfortunately, in many parts of our continent a sense of the emergence of violence always lurks in the background. People are never quite sure if clan and ethnic tensions over competition for resources will not break at the seams and degenerate into violence. The accentuation of ethnic tensions is, in most cases, motivated by politicians bent on safeguarding their personal interests under the guise of protecting the well being of their communities. On occasion, they encourage their communities to 'restock' their animals by attacking neighbouring communities. Idle youth are constantly manipulated in the perpetuation of this violence. Youth leadership in civil society can resist this.

Also as youth reconnect humanity, they will need to reach out and build bridges between human life and the environment. Issues of environmental degradation, contaminated water, air pollution, unfavorable mining and logging practices have a direct bearing on people's lives and are too important to ignore. The choices and decisions we make today must champion the cause of a balanced ecology so as to safeguard future generations. As we treat the earth, so we treat each other. Indeed, a peaceful physical environment is a metaphor about our lives with each other. Equally, an imbalance in the environment marks our own imbalance. As the integrity of our natural systems erodes, resources necessary for survival become scarce; land, water, minerals and fossil fuels are turned into battlegrounds. In many African countries, we can clearly see the interconnectedness of nature as one web of life. It cannot hold together

if one part is broken. Without peace, the earth ceases being a space of solace and becomes one of pain and anguish.

Identity can be a source of vibrancy and richness as well as of violence. Amartya Sen (2006:4) suggests that ‘we have to draw on the understanding that the force of a *bellicose* identity can be challenged by the power of *competing* identities.” These would include our shared humanity and other ways in which people are classified: as Kenyans, gender, class, sports interests, politics, workers, taste in music, profession and so on. These collectivities to which we belong give us a certain identity. Thus to accept the singularity of ethnicity as the only identity to which we belong, is to miss our complex natures. The youth have the ability to arrive at a reasoned choice in resisting ascription of singular identity so constantly invoked by politicians. They will need to do two things: first decide on the identities to which they belong and second determine the relative importance of the identities they choose. Only by doing this can the youth in Africa take over leadership and make meaningful contributions to national development without being bogged down by ascribed identities.

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Chapter Two

Perspectives on Youth Policies in Kenya

Margaret Wamuyu

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AU	African Union
CBO	Community Based Organizations
GOK	Government of Kenya
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
KKV	<i>Kazi kwa Vijana</i>
KYEP	Kenya Youth Empowerment Programme
MOYAS	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
NGO	Nongovernmental Organizations
NYC	National Youth Council
NYP	National Youth Policy
PEV	Post-Election Violence
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WHO	World Health Organization
YEDF	Youth Enterprise Development Fund
YP	Youth Polytechnic

Introduction

The past decade has seen Kenya develop programmes, policies and institutions to address the needs of youth, who form the largest proportion of the population. This is a significant step since youth, unlike children, have often been lumped together with the adult population in policy terms, yet they are not equal under the law. Increasingly, youth have come to bear adult responsibilities such as parenting, caring for parents and younger siblings, and working, in a world which is continuously being transformed and shaken. They have also become defenders of their societies through participation in war and violent conflicts. The situation calls for a shift in policy and popular perceptions about youth in order to effectively perform their roles in society. As implementation of youth-focused policies unfold, this paper attempts to analyze the extent to which they respond to the needs of young people in a way that provides adequate opportunities for participation. However, a review of the policies and programmes in place reveals that youth are still excluded in the policy implementation processes and the government strongly controls how youth engage in and benefit from the programmes. Notably, the establishment of a National Youth Council (NYC) to represent the interests of youth in decision making processes has been slow and laden with controversies. It is hoped that with the Council in place, youth will be represented at the highest levels of decision making particularly on issues that affect them.

Kenya's population is largely youthful with 75% of the country's population is made up of persons aged 1 to 30 years. Youth number 10.1 million, accounting for 32% of the country's population. Of these, 51.7% are female and 48.3 % male. Youth form about 60% of the total labour force in the country, but majority are unemployed. Out of 750,000 youth who graduate from various tertiary institutions in the country, only 25% access employment. The rest, 75% have to bear the burden of unemployment. Furthermore, some of those absorbed in the labour market have jobs that do not match their qualifications and personal development goals (GoK, 2006: 3). A high level of youth unemployment is associated with lack of adequate education and marketable skills, fluctuating demand for labour, demand for experience by potential employers and the relatively high youth population.

Like many developing countries, open youth unemployment in Kenya is compounded by substantial levels of underemployment and poor quality jobs in the informal sector (O'Higgins, 2001). Coupled with this, youth are confronted with other social problems such as poverty, HIV and AIDS, drug

and substance abuse and crime and violence. The AIDS scourge has broadly affected youth, with 33% of all the AIDS cases in Kenya being associated with people aged 15 to 34 years. 75% of all new HIV infections are among people aged 20 to 45 years. This situation presents youth as needy, helpless and unprepared to make any contribution to national developmental affairs. Consequently, they are marginalized in national state policies and have a weak legal position (Abbink, 2005).

Their subaltern position exposes them to misuse and manipulation by political stalwarts to intimidate and oppress their opponents. Others resort to crime and violence; problems which are widespread in both rural and urban areas. Crime and violence largely inform public perceptions and attitudes towards youth and also define the actions taken by state security organs against youth. Yet youth also form the majority of the victims of violence and are often at the tail end of the perpetration chain (Youth Agenda, 2007). While youth have been “labeled” criminals and received universal condemnation for executing violence, politicians have not been punished for incitement, hate speech, bribes and manipulations of ethnicity, which are strongly linked to political and electoral violence (*ibid*). Consequently, youth, who account for a third of Kenya’s population, are increasingly viewed as a problem in the society, which the government and other non-state actors need to ameliorate.

In fact, being young is widely and constantly perceived as problematic (Abbink, 2005). Boeck and Honwana (2005) note that youth often appear as “breakers” in various ways: as risk factors for themselves through suicide, drug abuse, alcohol, and unsafe sex; by breaking societal norms, conventions, sometimes by breaking limbs and lives; and sometimes by breaking the chains of oppression. Thus, policies and programmes should seek to integrate the youth factor as a necessary and autonomous element in the society, as well as actors capable of reshaping social relations and power formations.

This paper frames youth issues in developmental terms and examines state level policies targeting youth development in Kenya. Young people’s experiences are largely shaped by policies that affect their lives (Wyn and White, 2004/08). The rules, constraints and opportunities provided by the policies define the manner in which youth access goods and services such as education, health care and protection (*ibid*). However, all too often, policies adopt a “problem-oriented” approach to young people and reflect some deep anxieties in the public psyche (Williamson, 2005: 21). They also tend to be short-term, inflexible and over-coercive, seeking to achieve immediate results (Barry, 2005: 296), without necessarily altering the structures which hinder youth from

meaningfully engaging in the development processes and reaping appropriate benefits. This is rooted in the failure to critically identify the underlying causes of youth marginalization, their distinctive needs and the resources they possess and utilize in negotiating their life trajectories.

In this chapter, I argue that state-driven policies have the potential of integrating youth in the mainstream development processes, by creating a favorable framework for youth to develop their capabilities in order to access more rewarding opportunities. However, they also have the potential to create tensions and conflict, and fail to change the circumstances of youth. This is especially the case where the implementation structures are rigid and lack clear guidelines for engaging youth in the planning and implementation of policies and programmes. In addition, policies could remain irrelevant and too general, without having a real connection with the problems facing youth. Often times, the problems are multiple and linked, thus requiring policies that recognize this intricate connection. The chapter examines the National Youth Policy (NYP) and several programmes which are under implementation, such as the Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEP) and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF). The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (MOYAS-formerly known as Ministry of State for Youth Affairs) oversees development and implementation of youth-related policies and programmes.

Who are youth?

Youth definitions are contextual, depending on the social, cultural, political and economic environment. According to Durham (2000), the concept “youth” is a “social shifter”, it is a relational concept situated in a dynamic context; a social landscape of power, knowledge, rights, and cultural notions of agency and personhood. The experiences of youth in various socioeconomic and political conditions and their outcomes largely define youth. Certain experiences such as war, conflict, poverty and the HIV pandemic blur the social divide between youth and adult. Within these environments, young people constantly cross the frontier between childhood and adulthood, as they actively create and recreate their roles in the face of changing conditions (Boeck and Honwana, 2005). While these views construct youth as a fluid concept, other definitions look at youth as a static category in the society, with distinctive responsibilities based on their age. Consequently, youth-hood is viewed as a specific stage between childhood and adulthood when people have to negotiate a complex interplay of both personal and socio-economic changes in order to maneuver

the “transition” from dependence to independence, take effective control of their own lives and assume social commitments (UNESCO, 2004).

The United Nations (UN) defines youth as persons between 15 and 24 years¹. The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies three categories of youth- adolescents (10-19 years), youth (15-24 years), and young people (10-24 years). The African Union (AU) considers youth as persons between 15 and 34 years². In Kenya, there are various aged-based definitions of youth. The National Youth Policy defines youth as persons aged 15-30 years. The policy vaguely states that the definition takes account of the physical, psychological, cultural, social, biological and political aspects which explain the Kenyan youth situation. Article 260 of the Constitution defines youth as all individuals in the republic of Kenya who have attained the age of 18 years but have not attained the age of 35 years. The youth development programmes which the government has been implementing target persons aged 15 to 35 years. Lack of consistency in the definition of Kenyan youth reflects the difficulty that most African societies have in specifying the age bracket of youth. In African societies, responsibilities such as marriage are more important in defining the category where one belongs; that is, if one is an adult or youth.

Biological age has been used to define policies and laws of inclusion and exclusion, in contexts such as obligatory schooling, right to vote, obtaining identity cards and driving license and drinking alcohol (Hansen, 2008). The exclusionary tendencies of policies targeting youth have denied youth opportunities to contribute in development and also exposed them to tight regulations whose interpretation and implementation is left to the law enforcing authorities. Rather than promote young people’s well-being and development, certain policies have been used to constrain and deny them rights which are integral to their transition processes. Essentially, youth transition is presented as a linear, psychosocial development process starting in late childhood, which progresses in a piecemeal fashion towards the conventional goals of adulthood (Barry, 2005: 100). Coles (1995 cited in Barry, 2005) identifies four main transitional stages:

- Leaving the parental home and establishing new living arrangements;
- Completing full time education;
- Forming close stable personal relationships outside the family; and
- Testing the labour market, finding work and possibly settling into a career, and achieving a more or less stable livelihood.

Wyn and White (1997: 98) empathically argue that the term “transition” is a misleading concept in the contemporary society where the boundaries between youth and adulthood are blurred, employment insecure and often temporary and the conventional markers of adulthood (for example marriage and child rearing) are often purposely delayed. Given the difficulties of situating youth in the contemporary society, particularly African youth, within the “transition model,” this paper considers youth to refer to a series of transitions from adolescence to adulthood, from dependence to independence, and from being recipients of society’s services to becoming contributors to national economic, political and cultural life (United Nations, 2003). The definition is more encompassing since it recognizes that youth is a social process and young people are active agents in making the process more wholesome and meaningful. The definition is also realistic in recognizing the fact that the route to adulthood can be a continual maze of cyclical, reversible and uncertain pathways (Stephen and Squires, 2003 cited in Barry 2005).

The Kenya National Youth Policy

The NYP views youth as the largest source of human resource in the country and recognizes their exclusion from national affairs, including the design and implementation of programmes and policies that affect them (GoK, 2006). The overall goal of the NYP is to promote youth participation in democratic processes as well as in community and civic affairs. The policy provides a broad framework to address the issues affecting youth through meaningful engagement in socioeconomic and political development programmes. It blames the historical marginalization of youth on personal, structural and social factors such as high population growth, lack of appropriate and marketable skills, unclear and uncoordinated youth policies and programmes, lack of adequate resources and the low status which is accorded to youth in the existing structures (Ibid). These constraints are compounded by the prevailing attitudes in the society, which fail to recognize youth as important actors in decision making processes (ibid).

Against this backdrop, the NYP seeks to create an environment where youth have an equal opportunity to realize their fullest potential through active participation in economic, social, political, cultural and religious life without any discrimination. The policy proposes a comprehensive and multi-sectoral implementation strategy to work in harmony with other existing laws and development priorities to help meet the needs of youth. To this end, it proposes

the establishment of two bodies namely, NYC and an inter-ministerial committee. The latter comprises representatives of relevant ministries dealing with youth-related issues, with the responsibility of monitoring and reviewing youth activities carried out by other players in the government.

Tensions and contradictions of National Youth Policies

A national youth policy is a declaration of the commitment a country gives to setting and meeting the priorities and development needs of its young men and women and clearly defines their roles in the society and the responsibilities of that society to the young people themselves (UNESCO, 2004). It is a broad statement which provides a framework that governs the provision of services to young people, and provides the possibilities and limits for young people to participate in decision-making (Wyn and White 2004). According to UNESCO (2004), a national youth policy should embody strategies that empower youth to actively influence and shape the political agenda.

A progressive national youth policy obliges traditional decision-makers to work not only for young people but with them and let their experiences inform the development of appropriate interventions and services (Ibid). An integrated and cross-cutting youth policy strengthens the capacity and effectiveness of government to respond to the needs of youth (UN-Habitat, 2004). The development of a sound youth policy requires the involvement of a wide variety of social actors and large-scale cross-sectoral consultation with the civil society (UNESCO, 2004). In addition, young people must be considered as primary actors with whom to develop partnerships, not as spectators or advisers, but as active agents of change. Such a policy ought to be gender sensitive and pay special attention to the needs and experiences of the most vulnerable youth, those in conflict with the law, those living with HIV/AIDS, or in the most vulnerable and risky situations.

Youth-focused policies and programmes have been identified as fundamental in defining a suitable path and putting in place structures which enable youth to utilize their skills, develop their potential and contribute in the mainstream economy, politics and other affairs of public life. Well-designed policies have the ability to transform an environment which has hitherto been repellant to youth development and participation, to one where youth are recognized, supported and encouraged to actively contribute to national development. Youth policies are therefore viewed as critical in consolidating and amplifying young people's voices so that wrong assumptions and

perceptions that have long persisted can give room for more informed ways of planning and meeting the needs of youth.

Despite the wide range of benefits associated with youth policies, they often suffer from limitations which impact their effectiveness in terms of allowing youth to meaningfully engage in decision making processes. Wyn and White (2004/08) argue that policies affecting youth share a common theme of futurity- the valuing of young people for what they will become. They are based on the common view that young people are not important as youth, but as future adults. Their language draws on youth development to assert that young people are important because they represent the future cultural and social capital of the society. In her study on Youth Polytechnics (YP) in Kenya, Kinyanjui (2007) points out that YP education is not necessarily a direct or immediate route to employment, rather it is a futuristic investment that parents and households make to equip their children with skills in the hope that they will have a better life than themselves. Policies that locate young people's value in their future as adults also tend to emphasize "governmentality" (Kelly, 2001 cited in Wyn and White, 2008), whereby, they provide a rationale for monitoring and controlling young people's lives in the interest of protecting the future of young people and of the society.

Writing about *Rarry Boy* culture in Sierra Leone, Abdullah (2005) notes that colonial officials, through a process of social engineering, targeted two groups of youth; those in formal education and the "deviant youth." In educational institutions, attempts were made to promote leisure through recreational facilities, while reformist institutions were established to tackle the problem of juvenile delinquency and promote rehabilitation of delinquents (Abdullah, 2005; Wyn and White, 2008/04). The Western world on the other hand, emphasized legislation on work (prohibition of children of a certain age from working) and education (introduction of compulsory education) (Wyn and White, 2008/04). Both approaches served the purpose of promoting a sense of civic awareness and adherence to societal rules, norms and values. They also shared a common limitation. They denied agency to youth in transforming their own lives and foreclosed the need for a dialogue or conversation between youth and adults (Austin and Willard, 1998 cited in Abdullah, 2005). Thus the state acted as both a facilitator of youth development by establishing youth-specific institutions and as a key agent in the social control of youth activities (Wyn and White, 2005). This limitation about youth-hood survived the colonial era and has been reproduced *ad infinitum* in the national discourse about youth in postcolonial Africa (Abdullah, 2005).

Youth largely depend on the established societal structures to facilitate and shape their uncertain transitions to family, work and citizenship³. This implies that for youth to successfully utilize and benefit from the structures in place, such structures should subjectively accommodate individual needs and priorities.

The NYP for example states that “the government is obliged to carefully plan and be involved in developing youth to be responsible and available to contribute to the current and future nation-building efforts.” Accordingly, the state is obliged to “be the lead agent in supporting the implementation of the youth policy, by creating sufficient employment opportunities and education and health facilities for youth.” It also requires the state to provide the necessary framework for young people to fulfill their obligations. These include:

- Be patriotic and loyal to Kenya and promote the country’s well-being;
- Contribute to social and economic development at all levels including through volunteerism;
- Create and promote respect for humanity, sustain peaceful co-existence, national unity and stability;
- Protect the environment;
- Help to support and protect those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable;
- Promote democracy and the rule of law;
- Create gainful employment;
- Take advantage of available education and training opportunities;
- Develop a positive attitude towards work;
- Avoid careless and irresponsible sex; and,
- Take responsible charge of their lives.

Underlying the development of a youth policy is often the assumption that young people should not be taken seriously because they are not yet adults (Wyn and White, 2008/04). This tendency is definitely in tension with the increasing acknowledgment that young people should participate in decision-making, as espoused in many national and global youth policies and initiatives. In addition, there is contestation about the extent to which young people can be regarded as citizens in any sense or whether they are “simply citizens in training” (ibid). Consequently, youth are trained for their future roles and not equipped with skills and understanding that can be given expression immediately

(Owen, 1996 cited in Wyn and White, 2008). This reduces them to either non-citizens or at best, apprentice-citizens (Ibid). To be relevant to youth, training should encompass issues that help young people to play roles in forming, maintaining and changing their societies. From this perspective, youth would be valued and valuable citizens in the present, as well as citizens of the future.

The NYP proposes the formation of the NYC to help “coordinate youth organizations, design youth programmes and continuously review the implementation of youth-focused policies and programmes.” In addition, the NYC is meant to mobilize, sensitize and organize youth, in order to consolidate their voice regarding political, economic and socio-cultural activities. However, it took more than six years since the operationalization of the NYP, for the NYC to be established. Worse still, the elections for the NYC were marred with massive irregularities which saw them postponed several times. All along the government, through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports oversaw the implementation of the NYP and other youth related programmes. Parliament passed the legislation establishing the NYC in August 2010, but it was shelved awaiting further consultations within the government about its operationalization. Notably, the youth policy and programme implementation process has proceeded without proper mechanisms to accommodate the voice of youth, and effectively mobilize them towards setting a progressive and comprehensive youth development agenda.

Pais (2003) describes youth transition and trajectories in recent years as a maze, and policies are developed to help them out of the maze. However, he argues that oftentimes policies could lead to misleading trajectories and outcomes, whenever their primary focus is just to get youth out of the maze, without making any effort to support them within the maze. Supporting transition processes, rather than focusing on the end point, is more beneficial since it recognizes young people’s agency and allows them to actively take part in managing their lives as youth. In any case, a number of youth may already be undertaking “adulthood” responsibilities such as parenting, marriage and work but lacking a supportive environment to effectively carry on with these responsibilities. Thus, youth need to secure access to appropriate forms of social support, which are flexible enough to meet the different needs of various categories of youth.

While the language of youth policies reflects efforts to foster inclusivity in public affairs, there is usually conflict with other existing legal provisions which threaten to undermine the trust that youth may have in the policies. For instance, the need to maintain security and order in the society may target youth who

tend to “hang out” in the streets through arbitrary arrests, instituting curfews or other restrictive measures. Consequently, youth are denied the right to leisure, free movement and other fundamental freedoms even they are accorded opportunities to participate in work, education and training. Conflict between policy and practice reduces the trust that youth have in the institutions offering support and increases resentment of programmes targeting their needs.

The NYP broadly proposes a mechanism to harmonize sectoral policies and adapt all government programmes towards youth development, including promotion and protection of their rights. However, this has not been fully and effectively operationalized. This is reflected by the delays in establishing the NYC, reforming the justice and security agencies and failure to recognize other non-state actors working towards youth empowerment. Indeed, the government has raised its own suspicions about the youth development programmes that are supported by international agencies and implemented by NGOs and local community based organizations (CBOs)⁴.

A new legislation, The Prevention of Organised Crimes Act, 2010, which seeks to criminalize all groups undertaking organized crime, could have unprecedented consequences for youth, who are required to network and mobilize in order to meet their collective needs (GoK, 2010). The law identifies 33 organized criminal groups, which are mainly composed of youth. It criminalizes even non-members who abet or aid the groups’ activities by allowing them to use their property to carry out their activities (Ibid). Unlike the law providing for the establishment of the National Youth Council, which was passed by Parliament but shelved without specific details on implementation, the law on Organized Crime took effect immediately. While the NYP and other programmes, such as YEDF and KYEP, encourage youth to network and form groups, the new law could lead to isolation of some youth who belong or formerly belonged to the criminalized groups. The law has received criticism, especially regarding the groups identified as criminal. The Prime Minister pointed out that *kamukunji* Youth group, which is listed as an illegal group was not a criminal group, but a platform for people, especially youth, to debate public affairs and seek solutions to the problems facing them⁵.

Dynamics of youth participation

In Kenya, youth policies and programmes increasingly make reference to youth participation. Youth participation is linked to social capital and empowerment (Walther et al, 2002). Youth participation is only beneficial if it narrows the gap between policy makers and young people due to the historical

marginalization of youth from decision-making processes on issues regarding their welfare and their communities (UNFPA, 2006). However, in their attempt to allow youth to actively participate, policies tend to resort to traditional practice, whereby they control rather than, empower youth. Most formal youth policies seek to involve youth on an *ad hoc* basis or consult them in a structured manner only on specific issues. Others seek to influence youth to move in a certain direction, where youth have minimal or no input. Writing about youth participation in Europe, Walther et al (2002) argues that:

- Involvement in formal education is assumed to directly lead to participation in public processes.
- Young people experience participation as tokenism while activities such as political protest are criminalized rather than acknowledged as legitimate ways of seeking audience with authorities over some specific concerns.
- Participation is reduced to “soft” policy areas such as temporary employment or other labour market programmes and training, while leaving out “hard” issues such as criteria (qualifications, employability) which are more important.
- Young people want to participate now, yet programmes aim at reducing them to later on participation.

The institutional expectation on how youth should participate often differs from young people’s actual activities and priorities. The absence of public space for individuals to communicate their needs, interests and aspirations reduces the ability of formal institutions to understand which forms of participation are meaningful to youth and how they can be integrated into the established societal institutions. Underlying this is the widely held belief that youth lack the necessary competencies needed for active participation. This view has been used to legitimize young people’s restricted scope of participation. This is especially manifested in politics, whereby, youth are locked out of political parties’ decision making processes, while being used to mobilize supporters, distribute campaign materials, fill up the stadiums where campaign rallies are held and, in some instances, to harass and intimidate political opponents. In schools, students are encouraged to participate in activities such as drama and music, while issues of curricula, qualifications and discipline are left to the parents and schools authorities to decide.

Youth policies emphasize formal channels of involving youth in decision-making processes, while there are many informal ways in which youth engage

and participate in the society. Policies which recognize and seek ways of engaging youth in the informal settings are more beneficial since they reach out to youth who may not fall within the realm of formal channels such as schools, employment, religious institutions and NGOs among others. There are multiple and diverse forms of participation which occur beyond the sight of public authorities, and whose results could be more meaningful to specific categories of youth operating at the margins of the society. Finally, policies should seek to integrate and link the informal participation setting to wider institutional structures such as education, welfare, and labour market in order to enhance their capacity to empower youth.

Implementation of youth policies in Kenya: Successes and challenges

The MOYAS has been spearheading the implementation of several youth policies and programmes dealing with issues such as entrepreneurship, employment, training and education. Other institutions have also been involved such as the Offices of the President and Prime Minister, Ministries of Labour and Special Programmes. Of all the programmes, the entrepreneurship component has received more attention and support. Indeed, the YEDF was upgraded to a state corporation in 2007. The KYEP is another government-led initiative aimed at providing employment opportunities to youth in both rural and urban areas in labour intensive public works projects implemented by different government line ministries. Under KYEP, the *Kazikwavijana* (KKV which translates to jobs for youth) programme was launched in 2009.

A status Fund of the YEDF published in 2010 showed that the programmes have recorded a number of successes as seen in the increasing demand for loans by youth entrepreneurs, high number of youth enterprises, high number of young women borrowers (33,094) compared to men (23,981), and growing interest in youth programmes by the private sector. The programmes have also broadened their focus to include training and mentoring, business incubation, holding a business plan competition, and developing partnerships with private and public institutions. The report further states that, the government increased capital available for borrowing, thus, expanding its operations in order to cater for more youth.

The entry of more women in the field of entrepreneurship is particularly encouraging given that female youth are harder to engage, and even locate,

particularly in cities, where many female youth tend to live more private lives (Sommers, 2007: 17), mostly as domestic workers. However, in terms of the benefits accrued, women received 47% of the monies disbursed, while men, even with fewer enterprises, accessed 53% of the Fund. The most plausible explanation behind this outcome is that young women propose low capital ventures in order to minimize their risks and to be able to repay the loans granted. On the other hand, men have no qualms about developing huge business plans which require sizable start-up capital. The fear of enterprise failure and inability to repay seems not to be a major concern for young men. The male youth bias is also likely influenced by fear of this group. Marginalized male youth are thought of being the most potentially violent population, so they appear to have become the primary target group of youth development programmes (Ibid).

Overall, the impact of YEDF among the youth population is still too small given their numbers and the magnitude of unemployment. The status report does not adequately measure the impact of YEDF on the lives of youth, and only provides scanty details about the enterprises which have been supported through the Fund, and lacks information on the owners of the enterprises. The impersonal and superficial nature of the report makes it difficult to determine the quality of the programme and its ability to transform the lives of young people. This situation conforms to Sommers (2007) findings in his field work focusing on youth unemployment challenge in West Africa where he points out that:

Most (but not all) of the evaluation documents reviewed are not of high quality, and do not, for example, examine the lives of program graduates after programmes have ended. Many also do not critically compare the situation of programme participants to their counterparts who did not participate in the programmes. Indeed, profiles on which youth are in and not in a programme is either often unclear or not mentioned. It is frequently difficult to determine the gender, class, educational accomplishment, war experience, household stability, and ethnicity of youth in these two groups (Sommers, 2007: 17)

A proper evaluation report, capturing the voices of youth, would serve to improve the Fund's delivery mechanisms and enhance the well-being of youth who have an entrepreneurial spirit, and the ability to sustain a successful business venture. A sound, unbiased, professional, independent, and youth-inclusive assessment, monitoring and evaluation work should be mainstreamed in all youth employment activities, with sufficient funds to insure for quality evaluative action (Ibid).

The labour intensive public work programmes under KYEP are useful in the short term, due to their flexibility, which allows for scaling up or down based on demand of the labour. The main criterion used for job selection is age, which targets persons aged 18 to 35 years. The wage rate used is set at the legal minimum, which differs between rural and urban areas. To cater for female youth participation, the programme includes social services such as elder and child care. It also seeks to provide life skills training to ensure effective participation and benefits to the youth. The KYEP is funded by both the government and donors and has broadened its activities to include training (vocational, life skills and entrepreneurship) and internship, in order to enhance young people's employability.

A critical review of the KYEP reflects the common views in the society, that youth is a transitory period and young people are being prepared to be able to perform more solid roles in the future. However, for the majority of youth, the transition process is neither smooth nor continuous, and temporary or insecure work would not transform their lives. It only offers temporal relief, without changing the structural obstacles hampering their ability to lead quality lives. A more comprehensive approach to unlock blocked youth potential, enhance their capabilities and contribute in reshaping their lives would help to improve their wellbeing. The ability to sustain whatever opportunities they are able to access is very important and programmes need to place emphasis on the activities which promote youth's confidence, leadership and organizational skills and development of other positive attributes which foster general wellbeing.

The KYEP focus on female youth is rather traditional given that it provides them with the opportunity to work and enhance their skills in domestic work. This reinforces popular stereotypes such as a "woman's place is in the kitchen." Female youth should be supported to acquire education and training in order to find employment opportunities outside the sphere of the home, where they can compete on an equal footing with the men. Finally, the KYEP establishes a new implementation framework to undertake activities which are similar to those under YEDF. The mandate of MOYAS is to coordinate all youth related programmes that are under the ambit of the state, and should ideally accommodate the activities under KYEP to avoid wastage of resources and duplication of efforts.

In his employment model for marginalized urban youth in West Africa, Sommers (2007:18) shows the need to develop a pilot experiment that would

be monitored and evaluated over time. He emphasizes the need to target poor, marginalized male and female youth in urban areas, with the aim of building their confidence, life and work skills, economic stability and broader acceptance in society. Identifying and training qualified youth to become Youth Employment Trainers is another key feature, since it taps into the young people's abilities and potential. The trainers help youth to develop viable, demand-driven business plans over time, through careful analysis of the market sector that each youth group seeks to enter. The trainers also provide youth with relevant apprenticeship, vocational and life skills (such as HIV/AIDS awareness and parenting) to enhance the stability of the young group of entrepreneurs, who are in many cases facing linked challenges such as illiteracy, orphaned at an early age, conflict with the law, drug and substance abuse among others. Failure to focus on these multiple and complex problems and life histories could lead to total collapse of a youth employment programme.

Sommers (2007: 19) recommends that, once the youth groups are ready to start their enterprise, they receive small start-up grants (or a low interest loan). Additional grants can be obtained provided the group achieves predetermined benchmarks. An eight months intensive engagement through careful monitoring and evaluation is viewed as reasonable in order to stabilize the enterprise. An important component is the Monitoring and Evaluation Team (MET), comprising urban youth who are trained to carry out market and enterprise assessments. Once the pilot project is carefully evaluated, it can eventually be expanded and mainstreamed as a programme for reaching the significant numbers of unemployed and marginalized male and female youth.

A more inclusive model that accommodates youth as a resource in implementation of policies and programmes would be more beneficial to youth in Kenya since they, unlike popular beliefs, have good understanding of their needs, capacities and desires. They are also endowed with huge potential to drive their agenda through mobilizing and organizing to collectively develop plans to guide implementation of various policies and programmes. This is necessary for ownership of projects and further development of capacities and innovative ideas in areas that are of interest to them. There is inadequate ownership of, inclusivity and active participation in the implementation of the current youth programmes and policies in Kenya and youth have variously raised their sentiments on how they are implemented. The leadership wrangles, corruption and misuse of funds allocated to youth programmes have further diminished the credibility of institutions managing them. In deed, youth have accused the government (considered to be run by older persons) to be giving

them jobs but denying them their dues in the phrase '*kazikwavijana, pesakwawazee*' (meaning jobs to the youth, money to the older persons).

Conclusions

Youth in Kenya are confronted by multiple challenges, with unemployment featuring prominently. The magnitude of the problem suggests that majority of young people have been unusually patient and peaceful. However, just how long this unsteady peace can hold is unclear, given the events of the Post-Election Violence (PEV) in 2007/08 and rising crime in both rural and urban areas. As the government seeks to engage more closely and deeply with youth, as a starting point, it is important to specifically and accurately identify youth, their needs and the resources which they possess in order to work on supporting and enhancing them. Youth is not a waiting period, but a period of radical life transformation, which should be supported to facilitate development of a stable pathway for individuals as they assume more independence in their living, decision-making and building social relationships.

The feasibility of the current youth programmes and policies lies primarily in active and sustained engagement with organizations that work with communities to address their needs, and harmonization with other existing laws and policies. It also requires adoption of more dynamic mechanisms to mobilize and engage youth (of all categories) and support them in order to make more contribution towards development activities. The policies and structures provide an environment conducive for youth to develop appropriate skills, to enable them transform their lives, and confidently integrate in the society without feelings of alienation and deficiency or as "apprentice-citizens".

Notes

¹ This definition is universally accepted and applied by international agencies involved in youth programmes and activities.

² Most African governments use this definition as a basis for developing their specific age markers, which often reflect high upper age limits.

³ <http://www.up2youth.org/index2.php> Accessed on 10/28/2010

⁴ Daily Nation 12/01/2010

⁵ Daily Nation 12/05/2010

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Chapter Three

Socio-Economic Status of Youth in Kenya: Implications for Peaceful Elections

Chrispine Oduor Owino

Introduction

Defining youth is not easy as there is no universal definition of whom the youth constitute. Youth is not a homogeneous construct, but encapsulates several different experiences and diversities. There also seem to be overlap between international definitions of youth and children. Organizations have different definition of youth for instance, the United Nations (UN) general assembly has defines youth as those aged between 15 and 24 years while the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as everyone under the age of 18 “unless under the law applicable to the child, maturity is attended earlier”. Youth has been best understood as the transition stage between childhood and adulthood. Whereas age is useful when defining youth, it is insufficient indication to characterise the transition to adulthood. The Constitution of Kenya (CoK 2010) defines a youth as an individual who has attained the age of 18 years but has not attained the age of 35.

Youth population in Kenya

Kenya's population growth rate has been rising steadily over the years from about 2.5% per annum in 1948 to around 3.8% per annum in the 1980s. By the year 2009, the country's population size was slightly over seven fold the population in 1948. 78.31% of Kenyans are below the age of 34 years. According to the National Youth Policy draft document, Kenyans in the age bracket of 1 to 30 years constitute 75% of the country's population. Those aged 15 to 34 years old constitute 35.39%. While the proportion of children aged between 0 and 14 years has been declining since the 1980s, the population of Kenyans

aged 15 to 64 years has on the other hand been rising consistently. It is envisioned that the country will experience a demographic transition due to rapidly falling fertility rates as more women give birth to fewer children and as more women delay and space child birth. These factors together will in turn result in a “youth bulge”. It is this group that will form the country’s next generation of workers, citizens and leaders.

Youth employment and unemployment in Kenya

Unemployment and underemployment feature prominently amongst Kenya’s most difficult and persistent problems. These challenges that mainly affect the youth make it difficult for them to access economic opportunities thereby effectively blocking their transition to adulthood, if adulthood is to be measured by economic independence and ability to move out of one’s parents house marry and have children.

Unemployment was one of the challenges identified by Kenya’s independence government in 1963, and still is almost 50 years after independence. This is in spite of the numerous policy efforts that have been put in place to address the challenge by the successive governments. Among these was, the policy of Kenyanization at independence that sought to integrate Kenyans in the mainstream economic activities following several years of segregation of the “natives” by the colonial government. The government’s policy during the colonial era was such that, Africans were to be used as a source of labour for the mainly white owned settler farms. They were not allowed to actively engage in business or any other economic activities.

Other policies that have been put in place by successive governments include the development of the *Jua Kali* (informal) sector which however consists of menial jobs that provide little or no opportunities for advancement. The government also embarked on fiscal policies that include the provision of finance to young people for self employment and entrepreneurial skills development.

Most notable of the fiscal policies are the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) and the Women Enterprise Development Fund (WEDF) that were both established in 2006 and that have been receiving increased budgetary allocations over the years. There is also the public works programme *Kazi Kwa Vijana* that was launched by the government in 2009 with the aim of employing the youth in both the urban and rural areas in labour intensive public works projects such as road maintenance, water harvesting, afforestation and waste

collection among other jobs. Most of these policies implemented by successive governments have however not been able to create adequate and sustainable employment for youth in the country.

High unemployment experienced in Kenya has been attributed to several factors. The report of the Presidential Committee on Unemployment (1982/83) and the Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1985 on Unemployment identified the major causes of unemployment in Kenya as rapid growth of the labour force, low economic growth rate, job selectiveness among the unemployed, seasonality of some of the industries, skills imbalance, inappropriate technology and failure of development programmes to focus on areas with greater employment potential. Other factors that have been identified as contributing to unemployment include: weak implementation and coordination of youth targeted employment interventions, weak entrepreneurship culture among the youth and lack of coordination between educational institutions and industry (IEA 2010).

The challenge of unemployment and underemployment together with socio-economic inequalities and poverty disproportionately affect the youth whose autonomy, dignity and well-being seem to be eroding. Majority of Kenya's young people are unemployed, underemployed or underpaid and are therefore in the swelling ranks of the working poor. According to the International Labour Organization Office (ILO) (1995), the vast majority of jobs available to youth are low paying, insecure and with few benefits of prospects of advancement. A large proportion of young adults and a rapid rate of growth in the working-age dependency on parents and older siblings diminish self-esteem. This in turn fuels frustrations, which increase the likelihood of violence or conflict turning the affected youth into time bombs that can explode at the slightest provocation.

The youth constitute more than 67% of the unemployed in Kenya. Research indicates that the country's working age population increased from 15.9 million persons in 1998/99 to 19.8 million persons in 2005/2006. The largest rise in the working-age population over the period was recorded among the age cohort of 15 to 34 years where the working-age population increased from 9.7 million persons in 1998/99 to 13.1 million persons in 2005/2006. An increasing proportion of the country's working age population is inactive. This increased from 22.6% in 1998/99 to 26.6% in 2005/06 (IEA 2010).

Youth unemployment in Kenya between 1978 and 2005/06

Age Cohort	1978	1986	1998/99	2005/06
15-19	26.6	36.2	47	25
20-24	18.5	29.2	47.3	24.2
25-29	4.8	8.6	25.1	15.7
30-34	2	2.7	14.3	7.5
Average	12.97	19.2	33.4	18.1

Source: IEA Kenya, Youth Research Compendium

Research also indicates that unemployment is high among young women at 24% than among men at 19%. It is severe among youth in urban areas at 33% than in the rural areas at 17%. Unemployment is highest among those aged between 15 and 19 years old and this is explained by the fact that most of those within this age bracket are in still in school. Unemployment among those aged 20 to 24 years old was at 24% and that of those aged 25 to 29 year olds was at 16%. Total unemployment for the youth slightly increased from 19% to 20% while available data shows that overall unemployment reduced from 14.6% in 1998/99 to 12.7% in 2005/06.

Migration and urbanization as important components of population change have been rapidly increasing in Kenya with the urban population escalating from about 8% in 1962 to about 22% by 2008. With no employment opportunities in the rural areas most of these migrants come to urban areas as young adults, usually after completing secondary school education with employment as the main motivation for migration. The urban annual growth rate of 4% and development transformations necessary to support this growth, and enhance the quality of urban life not occurring at the same rate makes it challenging to sufficiently expand the labor market and spread of the labor force resulting in large populations of unemployed youth living in poorly serviced informal settlements.

The rate at which jobs are being created in Kenya is not the same as the rate at which the country's labour force is growing. This is evidenced by the fact that the informal sector which is also the main employer has been growing at an average rate of 17.2% per annum compared to the formal sector which has been growing at an average rate of 2.23% per annum while the country's working age population increased by 24.5% between 1999 and 2006 (GoK, Economic Surveys). This effectively means that more job seekers mainly the youth ordinarily remain out of employment for a longer period hence swelling the ranks of job seekers.

Most employers in Kenya, including the public sector have resorted to the increased use of casual, temporary, part-time, contract, sub-contracted and outsourced workforces as a means to reducing labour costs achieve more flexibility in management and exert greater levels of control over labour. The proportion of casual workers in the formal sector gradually increased from 17.9% in 2000 to 21.2% in 2005, 29.7% in 2006 and 32.2% in 2008, a trend that contrasts sharply with the country's desire to reduce poverty and enhance social protection. The most recent case being that of Kenya Airways, the national airline carrier that has contracted a third party to provide it with contractual labour for non-core roles at cheaper rates. By shedding 578 jobs, the airline expects to benefit from lower operational costs in the long run. The airline foresees a reduction of its staff cost by between 10 and 15 per cent or about Sh1.3 billion as a result of the redundancies.

By not addressing the employment issues affecting the youth, the country risks not only producing a generation of disillusioned young people, but also undermining its political stability and social cohesion and peace, as well as its long-term competitiveness and development prospects in the global context and achieving Vision 2030 might only be a pipe dream. High youth unemployment as experienced in the country risks social unrest, which can hurt the country's climate for investment. Disillusioned youth with no source of livelihood and income have nothing to lose by engaging in violence and by extension have nothing worth protecting from possible attack.

Youth education

Gross and net enrollments in pre-school, primary, secondary, tertiary and university enrolment have been increasing over the years mainly due to policy changes. These include the Free Primary Education (FPE), Subsidized Secondary Education and loans for university students. Completion and transition rates

from one level of education to another have been low though improving as more students from poor families have been able to access education. However, past education policies by the government have focused on increasing the number of people who go through the education system rather than learning that takes place to prepare youth for work and life. A report by Uwezo indicates that 5% of children completing class eight cannot read a class two story while 25% of pupils in class five cannot read a story of class two level. About 5% of 6 to 16 year olds still do not attend school even with the provision of Free Primary Education (FPE), owing to several social factors, but this varies from 40% in some regions to 1% in others. The problem of over-age children especially in rural areas is rather high (e.g. 60% in class 7 are above 14 years) and persists due to late entry, grade repetition and time-off school.

Youth participation in politics and economic development

Participation in the formal political system in most countries in the developing world often does not provide the youth to express their needs, aspiration and grievances. Young people's participation is about sharing ideas, thinking for themselves, expressing their views effectively, planning, prioritizing and being involved in the decision making processes. Kenya has 5.9 million voters aged 18 to 35. Of these, 25% come from Rift Valley, 15% from Central, 14% from Eastern, 13% from Nairobi and another 13% from Nyanza. Western, Coast and North Eastern contribute 10%, 8% and 2% respectively of the youth votes. With the exception of North Eastern province, throughout all the age cohorts and in all the provinces, there are more male voters than female voters.

The Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) was established by the government in 2006 to facilitate investment in micro, small and medium enterprises oriented commercial infrastructure such as business or industrial parks, markets or business incubators that will be beneficial to youth enterprises. Some of the objectives of the fund include: Providing funding and business development services to youth owned or youth focused enterprises; attracting and facilitating investment in micro, small and medium enterprises oriented commercial infrastructure such as business or industrial parks, stalls, markets or business incubators that will be beneficial to youth enterprises; supporting youth oriented micro, small and medium enterprises to develop linkages with large enterprises; facilitating employment of youth in the international labour market. The government has so far released Kshs 3,315,664,170 by 2010/11 financial year.

Generally, more young women (33,094) than young men (23,981) accessed the women and youth enterprise development funds respectively funds through financial intermediaries though there were regional and gender disparities. 47% of all the resources were accessed by young women and 53% were accessed by young men. A number of youth in organized groups have been able to access the fund and invested in development projects. Some of these groups have however been faced with challenges of mismanagement and as a result collapsed and were unable to repay the loans. The youth have also complained that the amount of money loaned to the groups is inadequate. The main challenge has been the lack of an entrepreneurial culture among the youth as most still seek blue collar jobs.

Youth and crime

Research indicates that crime is strongly associated with young people as 53% of crime is predominantly committed by persons aged between 16 and 25 years, 89% of whom are male and 11% are female. It however emerges that there are 'female crimes' and 'male crimes'. Women committed basically three types of crimes: infanticide and procuring abortion (84%), concealing birth (80%) and dangerous drugs and criminal damage (75%). On the other hand, men dominated five crimes: robbery and theft (99%), homicide (84%), offenses against morality (81%), assault (79%) and economic crimes and corruption (78%). Overall, crime has generally been on the increase but it was highest in 2006. Juvenile offenders involvement in crime was influenced by family deficiencies, while others indicated money (67%), peer pressure (13%) and survival (13%) as causes. Most participants reported to have committed their first offence between the ages of 12 and 15 years of age (30%) or between 16 and 19 years (23%). Poverty (40%) and alcohol/drugs (23%) were responsible for increased vulnerability of youth to re-commit crime.

Youth and ICT

The youth are the main users of the new Information Communication Technology (ICT) that include the internet, mobile phones, and computers. Although the main reason for many 15 to 24 year olds to use new ICT is entertainment. The new ICT technologies are having wide-ranging effects on youth transitions. Internet connection was prioritized highest among the new mass media to access reliable information and knowledge at 57% followed by communicating with others at 39% through e-mail, social networking, chatting,

Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) among other uses. Entertainment/media, leisure and commerce such as buying products and services at 2% as well as on-line banking through the internet are still underdeveloped in Kenya and are opportunity areas for growth. The most popular social network in the country is face book accessed by 96% of social network users, 75% of whom are 18 to 34 years old.

Youth health

Among the critical health problems young people face are those associated with sexuality and reproductive health and drug abuse. The overall HIV prevalence among youth aged 15-24 years was 3.8% (KAIS 2007). However, prevalence varies from 2.5% to 12% among young women of that age and 0.41% to 2.6% among young men of the same age. By 24 years, women were 5.2 times more likely to be infected with HIV than young men of the same age. Women's STI infection is about 2.5 times higher than that of their male counterparts in all the age cohorts. Sexually Transmitted Infection has been rising with age, more dramatically for women than men between the age of 15 and 39. Risk taking such as use of drugs and alcohol is another factor influencing the health status of young people. Alcohol (36%) and tobacco use (28%) are the most abused substances followed by *miraa* (18%), bhang (13%) and inhalants (5%) (IEA, 2010). Studies show that drunkenness is an important immediate situational factor than can precipitate violence. Despite increased investment in the sector, utilization of health services by young people remains low as only 12% of health facilities provide youth friendly services that would enable them to make informed choices and decisions regarding their health. There are also major regional and age disparities in access to services.

Youth, elections and violence

Elections has been defined as organized events at which people choose someone by vote for something and are in most cases held to vote people into public offices. Elections have been accepted by contemporary democracies worldwide as the means of effecting changes in government. The World Health Organization (WHO) 2008 report on violence and health defines violence as: "The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation". The International Federation for Electoral

Systems (IFES) defines electoral violence as: Any act or threat of physical or psychological harm to a person or damage to property, directed at anyone directly involved in an electoral process (voter, candidate, party officer, election worker, election monitor etc.), which may disrupt or attempt to disrupt any aspect of the electoral process (campaign, registration, voting counting etc.)”.

Electoral violence can be viewed as acts that seek to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through violence, assault, thuggery and intimidation amongst other negative political behaviours. The violence may manifest during pre-election, election and post-election stages and can be of either physical and psychological dimensions or both. Electoral violence negates peaceful coexistence, law and order. It militates against the consolidation of democracy. This in turn impact on the social and economic well being of the nation and creates imbalances or instances of *structural violence* (Galtung, 1969:167-191).

While Kenya has experienced cycles of election-related violence in the past decades, the scale and consequences of the 2007/8 post election violence were unprecedented. The violence affected six out of the eight provinces in Kenya affecting both urban and rural areas. The violence involved widespread destruction of property and land, with serious consequences on economic activity and food security. The violence shattered the country's national fabric exacerbating tension and mistrust along ethnic cleavages (Government of Kenya and Peace Net, 2011).

The youth played a central role in the post-election violence with over 70% of the direct perpetrators of the violence being young people (Educational Development Center, 2009). The youth also constituted the majority of victims (Youth Agenda, 2008). It is important to note that the vast majority of youth in Kenya did not get involved in the violence. A 2008 Afrobarometer report indicates that only 5% of youth across Kenya reported having used force or violence for a political cause during the time period surrounding the 2007 presidential elections. However, this small number had a disproportionately high impact on the stability of their communities and the country at large.

Implications of youth social economic status for peaceful elections

Peaceful election may be defined as the absence of violence, assault, thuggery and intimidation. Not only does the absence of peaceful elections threaten the stability of democracy but it also invites anarchy in a country. Absence of peace

affects a country's economy and its people's well being as it leads to temporary or even permanent loss of jobs and can lead to loss of investments and withdrawal of investors from the country as returns to their investment is no longer guaranteed a scenario that has been witnessed repeatedly in many African countries. It is unfortunate that some unscrupulous politicians see elections as a violent means of acquiring the spoils of democracy, maintain or wrench power. This is not made any better by the "it's our turn to eat" culture and ethnicity whereby communities feel that once they have their own in power then they are guaranteed the spoils of democracy. The situation is made worse by the poverty among the large number of unemployed youth who end up being used by some unscrupulous politicians as perpetrators of violence.

Political elites in a number of African countries have been accused of arming the youth, mostly political thugs, to manipulate electoral outcomes. In the wake of 2008 post election violence witnessed in Kenya, the Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation team noted that politicians exploited the youth's poverty to mobilize them on the basis of their ethnic or party affiliations into violence that left over 1,400 dead, hundreds of thousands displaced. The violence led to the destruction of property in the affected areas. It is widely documented that the youth were largely exploited by politicians to execute violent acts against and evict communities perceived to be foreign or outsiders (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, 2008) during the post elections violence. Politicians and local leaders have been blamed for having incited and paid armed gangs of youth to engage in looting, rioting, and killing after the elections.

Mobilization for violence along religious affiliations has however not been a challenge in Kenya as witnessed in the states of West Africa notably Nigeria though this is becoming a matter of concern following increased cases of targeted attacks on churches in the North Eastern and coat regions of the country.

Frustration is pervasive among the vast majority of Kenya's youth population who are unable to secure meaningful employment and by extension meet their basic needs, despite their relatively high levels of education. Such youth are more likely to participate in violence than a rich person in line with the relative deprivation theory (Gurr, 1970). When the situation is compounded by a "*youth bulge*," the propensity for violence increases (Urdal, 2007:90). Youth whose income is lower are more likely to rely on handouts from politicians making them more vulnerable to exploitation. Youth within families that have gone without basic needs several times or more are also more likely to engage in political violence. For such youth, the benefits of engaging in violence as a

means of gaining an income or a source of livelihood often outweigh the risks. As a result, they are particularly vulnerable to recruitment by unscrupulous politicians or ethnically-based gangs as was witnessed in the country 2007/8.

In the eyes of some politicians the lives of such youth might not be worthy of preservation and are thus disposable at any given time. They are potential tools for the instigators of violence as they can be easily incited for a small token. Such gullible youth might not see beyond the “job opportunity” by their new found masters – unscrupulous politicians who Sule Machika Usman describes as *“too valuable to directly get involved in electoral violence”*. Poor youth are desperate enough to seek any means including crime and violence just to survive and such politicians would be a blessing.

A report by the Department for International Development (DfID) highlights that “where youth feel existing power structures marginalise them; violence can provide an opportunity to have a voice” (McLean and Fraser, 2009). Youth’s lack of voice is manifest at multiple levels in Kenya: within families where they are not consulted on important issues such as land utilization, at school where they are not directly involved in the election of their prefects, in public where their opinion is not sought during *barazas* and in the political arena where they have been seen in terms of votes.

Exclusion from the political process represents perhaps the greatest potential push factor toward violence. This is particularly a risk in Kenya, where 75% of youth believe that it is difficult for ordinary people to have their voices heard between elections (Afrobarometer, 2008). The youth for a long time have felt that they are sidelined when it comes to politics and making decisions and the formulation of policies that affect them. A large percentage of youth in the country are of the opinion that the ordinary person outside there can do little or nothing to improve the situation with how the government is run. Elections therefore become one of the ways through which the youth are able to influence who gets into public offices in the hope that their candidate once there will effect the necessary changes. It is therefore important that efforts put in place to meaningfully consult with and include the youth in politics and in the formulation of policies that affect them. The youth should not, in the words of Herbert Kerre of Kabianga University college, be used as “flower girls escorting the aspirants” only to be abandoned and forgotten once the wedding is long over. There is need for institutional representation for building collaborative social models that give voice to young people and adequately take their input into account.

A lot of information on the on-goings in the country is obtained through the media. Independent media therefore goes a long way in preventing or triggering electoral violence. The media might become a source of conflict generation when they succumb to influence of selfish politicians who would want to use them as propaganda launch pad. This was witnessed in the country before and during the 2007 elections with some media houses openly taking political sides. It is important that the language used in both print and audio visual media does not cause tensions among the populace. The media is a causative instrument for electoral violence if they indulge in campaign of mudslinging, defamation or slanderous attack on other political contenders. This is a sure cause of electoral violence.

While social media contribute to dialogue it can have adverse effects as those seeking power can use them to organize for political influence and political violence. It will be remembered that during the 2007/08 crisis mobile phones made it cheap to spread hate messages that contributed to ethnic based mob violence. Social media such as tweeter and face book need not be destructive as it can be used to mobilise the youth for peaceful elections. Social media can be used to put more pressure on democratic leaders to be responsive to the will of the voters. The youth can through the social media shape debates on issues of importance by shifting discussions on who or what community wants to vie for what position to the roles to be performed and what is expected of those elected into offices of the president, the governor, the legislators, the senators, the ward representatives. Social media can be used to rally the youth for peaceful elections.

Conclusion

The general feeling among Kenyan youth is that they are a marginalized lot as they are not meaningfully involved in decision making nor are they consulted in the formulation of policies that affect them. In order to bring the youth into the fold of ensuring that the country remains peaceful during elections, the government and the country leadership needs to reactivate intergenerational solidarity mechanisms and better share political, social and economic power with the young generation who have for a long time now felt excluded economically through unemployment, under employment, ownership of assets; politically as they have no voice and decision making power; socially due to lack of access to services e.g. only 12% of health facilities in the country provide youth friendly services; and culturally as they get humiliated also lack an identity.

There is need to focus youth strategies and come up with action plans on better integration of young people into society through active citizenship, social dialogue and sustainable employment opportunities. This calls for enhanced support for and investment in young people through adequate policy choices and action. The government should strengthen youth policies and participation, fostering job creation, improve life-long learning opportunities and continue stimulating youth entrepreneurship through fiscal policies. It is only through creating a sense of belonging among the youth that they will feel that they have a duty to protect their country as they have a stake. It is only then that they will work towards ensuring that peace prevails in the country.

The country cannot afford to get embroiled in another round of violence as has been experienced during and after the 2007 elections as it is likely to lose investor confidence which may in the long run translate into loss of jobs as investors pack and leave thereby aggravating the already dire situation. A peaceful environment is conducive for economic growth, the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the country's Vision 2030. Ensuring that elections are peaceful is important to all Kenya as violent elections affects us all, those in government and those out of government, electoral winners and losers, the citizenry, the employed and unemployed, the young, the old, both men and women. The youth have to be part of the solution by being committed to promoting peaceful and fair elections. The youth in media must be objective in their reporting, those in government and Civil Society Organizations should discharge their responsibilities credibly and the youthful politicians must protect and safeguard the hard earned democratic space that is enjoyed in the country.

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Chapter Four

Opportunities and Challenges for Participation of Young People in the Electoral Process

Suba Churchill

On August 7-8, 2012, Africa Health and Development International (AHADI) organized and successfully executed a national conference on the theme: “Youth and the Social and Economic Impact of Peaceful Elections”. The conference brought together young opinion leaders from around the 47 counties into which Kenya is now constitutionally divided for purposes of devolved governance.

Such was the appropriateness of the theme and timing of the conference that its relevance will continue to reverberate in the minds of participants for some time to come. Appropriate because it is the youth who are believed to have participated more actively in the post-election violence that visited Kenya after the disputed 2007 presidential elections in which an estimated 1, 330 Kenyans died, with many more losing their limb and property in the milieu.

Another 500,000 people are believed to have been displaced from their homes and are still living in squalid conditions in the make-shift camps that dot parts of the country even as the country heads to another general elections in a matter of months.

The announcement of the 2007 Presidential Election results on 30th December 2007 provoked unprecedented violence in Kenya’s political history. Ever since the country attained political independence from British Imperial authorities in 1963, efforts to address historical injustices and national integration have not achieved much.

Successive post-independence governments have failed to come up with clear and bold strategies to address issues of regional inequalities, land allocation, distribution and use. There are some sections of the Kenyan society that have remained landless, having been dispossessed of their ancestral land by the

colonial forces. There are regions of Kenya that do not have a sense of belonging because they have been politically and economically marginalized from mainstream participation in the economic and political life of their motherland. There are those who strongly feel that resettlements that took place after independence were not done fairly and that the matter should be revisited so as to enable them obtain justice for their land.

The perception that the 2007 presidential elections were manipulated to defeat the democratic will of the people of Kenya only served as the powder cage that lit the simmering fire of long-standing intra- and inter-ethnic tensions and animosities. The violence only ceased when the National Peace Accord was signed on February 28, 2008 under intense local and international pressure on the political elite.

The National Peace Accord put in place mechanisms for entrenchment of the political agreement between the two main political parties in the Constitution. This led to the formation of the Grand Coalition Government. The Accord also called for speedy resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and inquiry into the causes of the post-election violence and the bringing to justice of its perpetrators. It further called for investigations into the conduct of the Electoral Commission of Kenya as then constituted (ECK) with a view to recommending reform of Kenya's electoral system.

The Accord, mediated by the immediate former Secretary General of the United Nations Organizations H.E. Kofi Annan, and the Panel of Eminent African Personalities called for immediate action to stop violence and restore fundamental rights and liberties of the Kenyan people.

Both parties to the conflict, namely the Party of National Unity (PNU) and its allies on the one hand, and the Orange Democratic Party (ODM) on the other hand, committed themselves to enhancing security and protection of the population and their property as well as the restoration of the respect for the sanctity of human life. The parties also agreed to ensure that the freedom of expression, press freedom and the right to peaceful assembly are upheld.

They also committed themselves to immediate measures to address the humanitarian crisis then prevailing in the country by ensuring that affected communities, families and individuals are assisted to resettle and go about their lives, while at the same time promoting reconciliation, healing and restoration of normalcy. But above all, the parties resolved to ensure the impartial, effective and expeditious investigation of gross and systematic violations of human rights and that those found guilty are brought to justice.

The Accord made strong recommendations on how to overcome the current political crisis. Under this Agenda item, the parties negotiated and agreed on solutions towards resolving the political crisis arising from the disputed presidential electoral results as well as the ensuing violence in the country. The negotiations rightly pointed out that the prevailing crisis revolved, in large measure, around the issues of power and the functioning of State institutions and that its resolution required undertaking of constitutional, legal and institutional reforms, tackling of poverty and inequality as well as combating regional development imbalances.

It was also agreed that the parties under the Grand Coalition Government tackle unemployment particularly among the youth, consolidate national cohesion and unity, undertake comprehensive land reforms as well as addressing transparency, accountability and the culture of impunity rampant in the country.

Under the Agreement, agenda items 1, 2 and 3 were to be addressed within 7 and 15 days from the date of the commencement of the Dialogue while Agenda 4 was to be resolved within one year after the commencement of the Dialogue. The Dialogue was launched on February 28, 2008.

Under Agenda 4, the Grand Coalition Government promised to facilitate delivery of a new constitution within one year. Even though the process has kicked off and the Committee of Experts which is the main organ of review is in the process of being put in place, there is an urgent need for the civil society to develop strategies of monitoring the process and putting pressure on the Government to proceed with speed in view of the fact that the one year within which this process should have been concluded has already elapsed.

More than four years after the signing of the Accord and the formation of the Grand Coalition Government, not all those who were internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been resettled. The process of ensuring impartial, effective and expeditious investigations of gross and systematic violations of human rights and bringing perpetrators to justice was recently called off for what the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) termed as lack of evidence. But it is the situation of youth unemployment that has remained unchanged despite the pledge by the government to create 500, 000 jobs annually.

The timing of the conference, therefore, provided the youth with the opportunity to take stock of the social, economic and political situation and reposition themselves as critical players in the emerging dispensation after the enactment of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 as envisaged in Agenda 4 of the National Peace Accord. Article 55 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 demands

of the State to: “take measures, including affirmative action programmes, to ensure that the youth-

- (a) access relevant education and training;
- (b) have opportunities to associate, be represented and participate in political, social, economic and other spheres of life;
- (c) access employment; and
- (d) are protected from harmful cultural practices and exploitation”.

These provisions, progressive as they may appear, have to be translated into legislative and policy programmes that can impact positively on the youth if they are expected to play a more proactive role in the social, economic and political life of the country. But it is in the political arena that the Constitution and the enabling legislations that open more opportunities for youth participation in active representative politics. The youth constitute the single largest age group in the country but the political leadership in general and the government in particular is yet to develop innovative ways of tapping into their enterprise and idealism for the full realization of their potential.

The 2009 Census put Kenya’s population at 38.5 million people. Of this, 9, 495, 835 were youth aged between 20 and 34 years. Also significant is the fact that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) is targeting to bring slightly over 18 million Kenyans into the new voters register. This will be 6 million more voters joining the voters roll than were accounted for in the 2010 referendum on the Constitution, majority of them being young voters who have attained the mandatory voting age between now and 2007 when the last elections were held.

What these statistics mean is that more than half of those expected to cast their ballot in the 2013 general elections are voters who still fall within the age bracket of young people. Like other citizens, the Kenyan youth have constitutional rights to participate in national and local elections. They can participate as voters and as candidates for the various elective leadership positions that have been established under the Constitution.

The right to vote and seek elective leadership positions encapsulate other civil and political rights, including the right to nationality and identification, the right to be registered as a voter, the right to a peaceful campaign and voting environment, the right to vote and choose a candidate or political party of one’s preference. Other political rights that the youth should not be shy to enjoy are the right to form and/or participate in the formation of a political

party, including the right to participate in the activities of, or recruit members for, and to campaign for a political party or cause of one's choice.

These rights and freedoms, including the freedom of association, assembly, demonstration, picketing and to petition those in authority are all enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. These civil and political rights and freedoms form the constitutional bedrock of the many opportunities that are at the disposal of the youth of Kenya to participate in the electoral process. Thus, the youth will have representation in the various deliberative assemblies that are established under the Constitution.

In the 47 devolved governments, membership of the County Assemblies shall consist of “the number of marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities and the **youth** as will be prescribed by an Act of Parliament”.

In the national legislature, Article 97 (1) of the Constitution provides that membership of the National Assembly shall include “twelve members nominated by parliamentary political parties according to their proportion of members in the National Assembly in accordance with Article 90, to represent special interests including the **youth**, persons with disabilities and workers”, while that of the Senate shall “consist of two members, being one man and one woman, representing the **youth**” (Article 98 (1c), in addition to other traditionally marginalised groups. It should also be emphasized that nothing in the cited provisions of the Constitution excludes the youth from contesting any other elective position, including the presidency. The age limitation that had hitherto barred young people from running for the office in the former constitution has been effectively removed.

As provided for in Article 85 of the Constitution, young people also are eligible to stand for all the elective positions under the Constitution as independent candidates, on condition that any one of them desirous of standing as an independent candidate is not a member of a registered political party or has not been a member of a registered political party for at least three months immediately before the date of the election. It should, however, be noted that in order that young people maximize on the opportunities highlighted above, their best chances exist if they operate through political parties. This is particularly so if they want to be considered for nomination as anticipated in Articles 97, 98 and 177 of the Constitution.

However, for elections to serve their purpose, which is the expression of the political and democratic will of the people, they must be conducted periodically, peacefully, credibly, freely and fairly. This is particularly important

because, in a democracy, legitimate authority is derived from the will of the people that can only be effectively expressed through free and fair elections. Such elections should be free to the extent that all adult citizens are eligible and have the opportunity to vote in the elections without being coerced or intimidated.

The elections should also be fair in so far as their outcomes are representative and do not distort the free will of the people. Indeed, Article 81 (e) of the Constitution outlines universally accepted standards that the elections should uphold, declaring as a principle that any future elections shall be free from violence, intimidation, improper influence or corruption.

Kenyans know just too well that part of our struggle at the this point in time is the collective desire to break away with a not-too-distant past in which elections could be described as anything else but free and fair, a situation that led to civil strife, loss of life and limb. These constitutional provisions have further been strengthened in a number of legislations, including the Elections Act, 2011, the Political Parties Act, 2011, the Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission Act, 2011, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission Act.

The Public Campaigns Financing Bill 2012 also seeks to diminish the influence of money and corruption in the electoral process by regulating the amount of money that political parties and candidates can spend in their campaigns for the various elective positions.

Part IV of the Elections Act is elaborate on election offences that have hitherto been accepted as norms in Kenya's electoral process. The section outlaws with severe legal penalties and consequences electoral offences relating to tampering with register of voters, and voters' cards, multiple registration as a voter, offences relating to the actual casting of the ballot, and offences that may be committed by members and staff of the electoral body. Also singled out are offences of impersonation, treating, undue influence on voters including bribery, use of force or violence during the election period, use/misuse of national security organs and public resources for personal electoral advantage.

This elaborate catalogue of electoral dos and don'ts will no doubt further enhance the much need levelling of the political playing ground for participation of the youth in the electoral process. But it is the yet to be enacted Public Campaign Financing Bill, 2012 that will be a great boost to youth participation as candidates in the elections. The Bill, once passed into law, will track and seek to diminish the influence of money which has in the past distorted election

outcomes as uninspiring candidates manipulate amenable voters with their ill-gotten wealth to buy their way into leadership positions. The anticipated law on Leadership and Integrity is also expected to help weed out such undesirable candidates from seeking leadership positions. This will mean that young people who naturally have not had much time to acquire and accumulate wealth will find themselves competing with other candidates for elective positions largely on merit.

But laws, no matter how good their intent they may be, will not cure our body politics of the partisan wrangling, broken promises and brinkmanship if as a people Kenyans, particularly the youth do not transit from the old habits and embrace the new values, principles and culture of the new order. It is one thing to write a good constitution and another thing altogether to proclaim, internalize and uphold its spirit and live up to its values, ethos and principles. This is the constitutionalism that Kenyans are now expected to embrace, amidst the continuing instances of impunity, corruption, tribalism and other isms for which Kenya is dubiously known beyond the tourist hotels, warm climate and wild animals that feature on the postcards.

As past experiences have served to illustrate, no country, Kenya included, is immune from political dysfunction, breakdown of law and order and the wanton destruction of life and property of the magnitude that occurred immediately after the 2007 elections. The need to conduct our politics and other public affairs in a manner that promotes compromise, tolerance and non-discrimination on grounds of race, sex, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth is more imperative than ever before.

There is an urgent need to inoculate ourselves from this past by embracing a new value system, a value system informed by Chapter 6 of the Constitution which spells out the characterisation of the change in leadership that we want to see and be part of as young people. It should be emphasized in the same breath that Chapter 6 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 is not just about leadership and integrity of those seeking elective and appointive leadership positions. It is a demand of all citizens, including voters and those who are yet to attain universal suffrage because, as Barack Okwaro Muluka once rightly pointed out “the roots of corruption are deeply grounded right in the electorate. The destructive seeds of ethnic hate and dishonesty have been sown there. The loss of self-esteem and human dignity has its foundation at the electorate, where men and women leave the warmth of their beds to keep vigil on the roadside at night, waiting for just anybody to harass for election money”.

As the youth seek to enjoy the expanded democratic space and dispensation that the Constitution has brought, it should not be lost on all Kenyans that they owe it to each other and to our freedom fighters, current and future generations as a duty to respect, uphold and defend the supremacy of the Constitution. Yes, Kenyans and the Kenyan youth in particular owe it to the gallant pioneers for change whose vision for a better Kenya saw them resist superior weaponry of colonial occupation and raised their voices against the imperial forces as they fought for independence.

The youth owe it also to the few representatives of the youth who despite their lack of numerical strength, struggled with tact to ensure that the youth as a significant segment of the society receive the recognition that they enjoy today in the constitution at the National Constitutional Conference held at the Bomas of Kenya between 2003 and 2004.

The youth owe it to the mythical Wanjiku, who despite the intransigence of the then ruling party KANU, soldiered on through mass action and other peaceful activities to bring the KANU government to a negotiating table. They owe it to the Citizens Coalition for Constitutional Culture (4Cs), for bringing together progressive forces that provided the initial platform for ordinary citizens to bring pressure that ultimately weakened the camel's back and forced KANU to recognize that the wind of change blowing across the country in the 1990s was irresistible.

As the ultimate custodians of all sovereign power of the new republic, Kenyans owe it to the gallant sons and daughters of our motherland who rose against oppression in 1992 and demanded the repeal of section 2 (a) of the old constitution - the rubric that had hitherto prohibited formation of other political parties.

As a people, we owe to the National Convention Executive Council (NCEC), the reform lobby group that took up the reform baton in 1997 and popularised the popular demand for comprehensive of the constitution and soon embarked on a series of mass action activities that finally led to the Inter-Parties Parliamentary Group (IPPG) legislative and administrative reforms that were realised before the 1997 elections.

We all owe it to all civil society organizations in their various formations, including trade unions, women's organizations, organizations working for and with persons with disability, children, political and other prisoners, the students movements, the university academic staff unions, farmers, fisher folks, and other organized citizen groups that kept the fire for change burning and have

refused to rest on their laurels until lasting change is realised. But even as we celebrate the new dawn precipitated by the Constitution, we should be alive to the challenges ahead.

The most ominous of them is the need to remain vigilant as Parliament debates, considers and passes the enabling legislations aimed at establishing the framework for the full realization of the new dispensation.

We have a responsibility, nay, a sacred duty to educate not only ourselves on the contents of the Constitution as we go about our daily struggles for survival and above ensure that the new order is not derailed by those still suffering from the hangovers of the old order and may be desirous of rolling back the clock of our hard won freedom.

We should all be reminded of the words of Paul of Tarsus when, while writing a letter to the Christian Church in Rome, put down these words: “You, then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you not steal? You who say people should not commit adultery, do you not commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who brag about the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law”?

Only then, shall we stand proud among the community of nations as a people liberated from the yoke of colonialism and neo-colonialism and ready to live by a new constitution that we unanimously adopted and gave unto ourselves and to posterity.

Chapter Five

Economic Implications of Peaceful and Fair General Elections in Kenya

X.N. Iraki

Introduction

Peace has been man's greatest objective throughout history; unfortunately history is more about war and lack of peace with most of human history written in blood. 58,000 Americans were killed in Vietnam War while the battle of Somme in France killed 58, 000 in one day in 1916 during World War I.

History's greatest events are defined by lack of peace; 1066 AD, Alexander the Great, Napoleon, Mau Mau and more recently, the Balkan Wars and the instability in DR Congo and other parts of the world. Countries experiencing lots peace such as Switzerland and Costa Rica are rarely in the news.

It could be argued cautiously that war often leads to peace; Germany and USA are great trading partners but fought each other during the WWII, less than a century ago. This cannot be an argument for instability. As we approach general elections, everyone is concerned about peace, because our history has shown we have the propensity to be unstable, from post election violence (PEV) of 2008 when more than 1300 died.

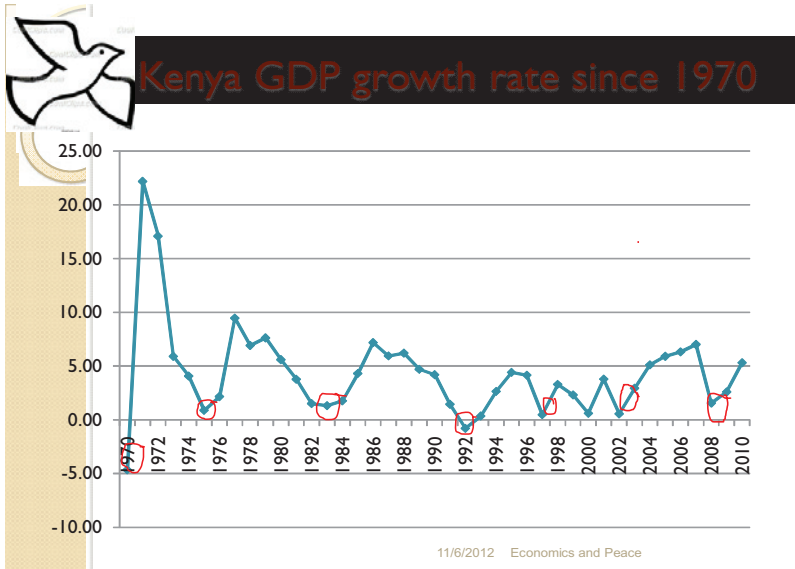
Most wars are economic in nature, fought over scarce resources from water to pastures. That is why land has been the epicenter of most wars; it was historically the most important economic resource, and it still is in most countries. Through fighting, some people get access to resources they could not, peacefully.

For the modern economies, the resources fought over might not be that tangible, they could include jobs and even access to prestige and power. Behind any political violence or instability is the invisible hand of economics. This is

despite a study done by government of Kenya/UNDP (2011) that showed only 16 per cent those interviewed saw economics as a source of conflict.

The effects of political instability and violence to the Kenyan economy are reflected by economic growth dips as the figure 1 below shows.

Figure 1

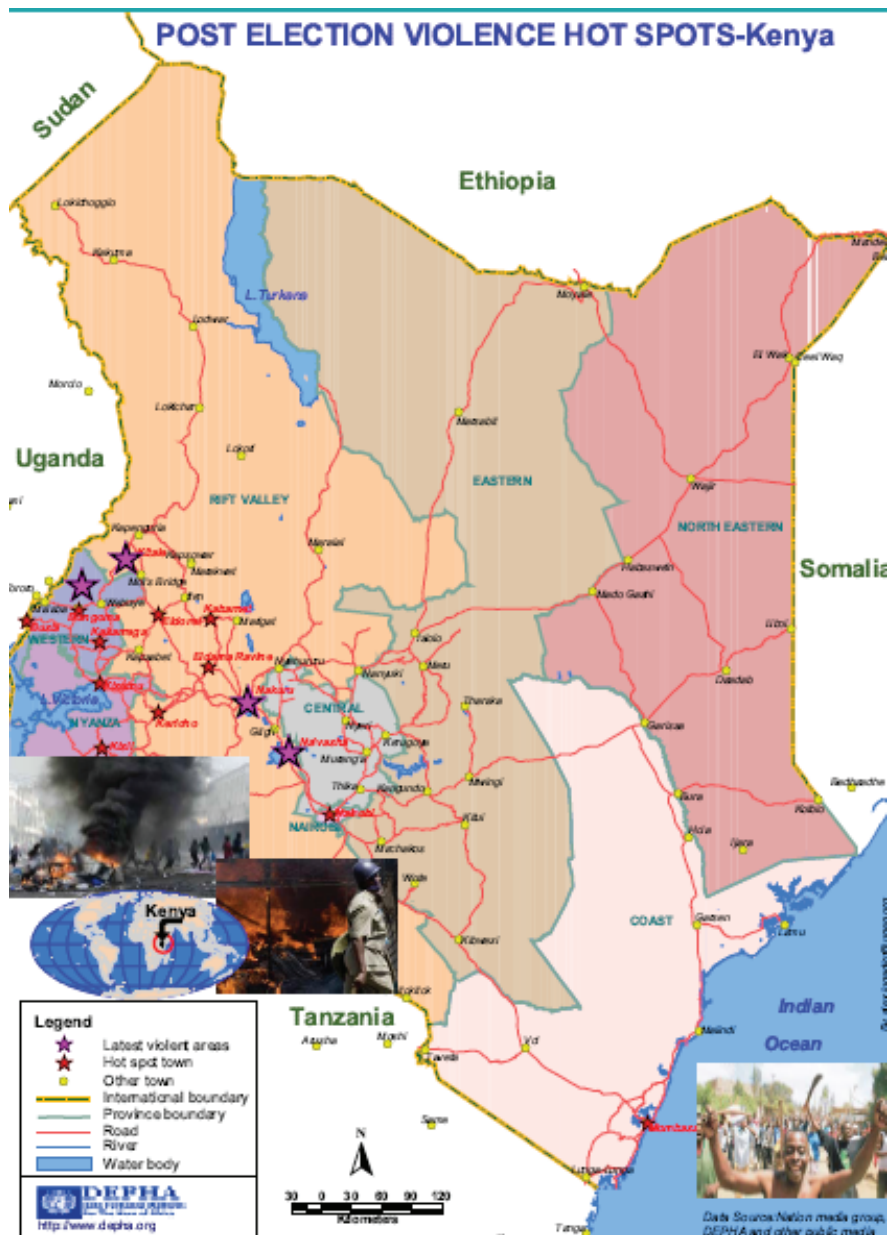


Source of Data: World Bank 2012.

The circles shows periods of instability and the subsequent fall in economic growth. The infamous land clashes are clearly shown by the dips in 1992, 1997 and 2008.

A map of Kenya's political hot spots during the 2008 post election violence seems to support that economic cause of violence. Land has become scarce because of fast population growth- economics again. In all the skirmishes, its entrepreneurs who suffered most- economics again. Even envy which drove some clashes has economic origins.

Figure 2



Sources: Data exchange program of the UNEP, 2008.

The economic cost of PEV is estimated to have costed the economy billions in lost revenues as businesses closed and economically able who were killed or disabled. Other regions nearer home that have experienced instability include Sierra Leone, DR Congo, Uganda-After Idi Amin, Sudan, Rwanda, Nigeria and Somali. Most would have avoided chaos if they had a working democracy.

Farther, resources used in civil strives could have been channeled else let alone the long term effects of instability -often not considered; imagine rearing a kid from rape in a war or civil strife or hatred passed to next generation-Balkan war grudges stretch as far back as 1689 ! The road to peaceful elections and aftermath may be paved in economics. It is unfortunately that as we prepare for 2013 general elections, not much focus is going to economic issues.

Economic road to peace

During the PEV in Kenya, there was no violence in Runda, Karen, Muthaiga and other affluent suburbs, a clear indicator that political violence has economic origins. The PEV brought into fore another fact; growing inequality. No one would have expected PEV when Kenyans economy was enjoying a robust growth. This growth seems not to have been accompanied by growth in equity leaving many people feeling alienated and shunted to the economic periphery espoused by increasing number of small and microenterprises(SMEs).



A hawkker at work: Photo by author, 2012

For most of Kenya's post independent period, social upward mobility was easy; one could easily ride on education which was accessible and affordable. Since the Structural adjustment programs (SAPs) in 1980s, and liberalization of the economy one decade later, when basic services were put under the mercy of market economy, inequality has grown and perhaps creating resentment that easily found valves through post election violence(PEV).

If we have to avoid PEV we must build economic roads. If we do not grow the economy and at the same time give every citizen an opportunity to reach his potential, there shall not be peace even if no houses are burnt; lots people will remain emotionally scared. The increasing number of suicides may be an indicator of such emotional scars. A few suggestions on how we can use economics to pave the road to peace follow and avoid post election violence follows;

Innovation; the new source of wealth

If we can shift from land to innovations, creating new processes and products, we could create lots of new jobs and confident young men, less willing to engage in violence. Leading firms in world in terms of profitability are also leaders in innovations as indicated by patents. The table shows some world leaders in innovations.

Table 1: 2011 US patent leaders

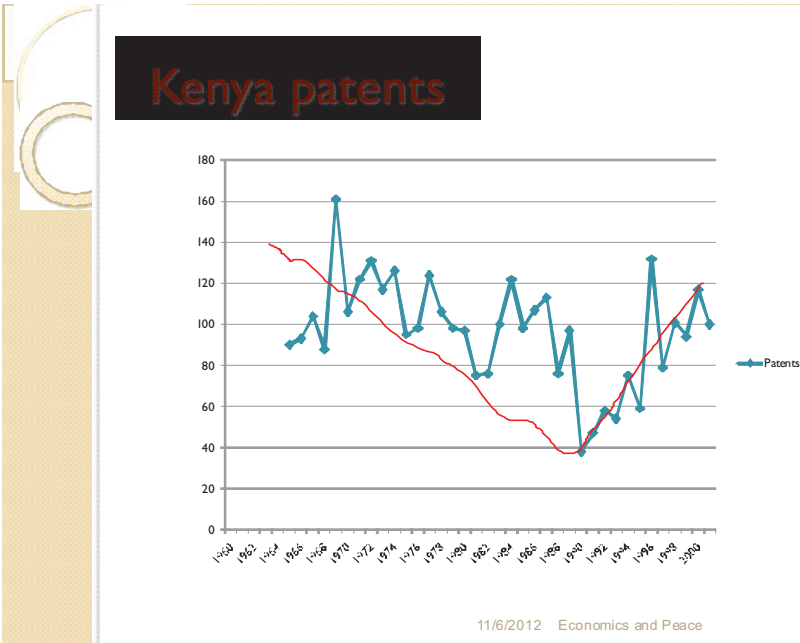
Firm	Number of patents
1. IBM	6,180
2. Samsung	4,894
3. Canon	2,821
4. Panasonic	2,559
5. Toshiba	2,483
6. Microsoft	2,311
7. Sony	2,286
8. Seiko Epson	1,533
9. Hon Hai	1,514
10.Hitachi	1,465

Sources: <http://www-03.ibm.com/press/us/en/pressrelease/36463.wss>

The beauty about innovations is that there is no limit to knowledge and innovation, unlike land which though can be reclaimed is limited. Innovations do not suffer from the law of diminishing returns. More importantly, innovations discourage zero-sum game thinking, where one's gain is someone's loss. In innovations and knowledge, one can use the same idea without diminishing its value. Once the current generation realizes this simple concept, lots of economic pressure based on land will dissipated and create lots of opportunities for peace.

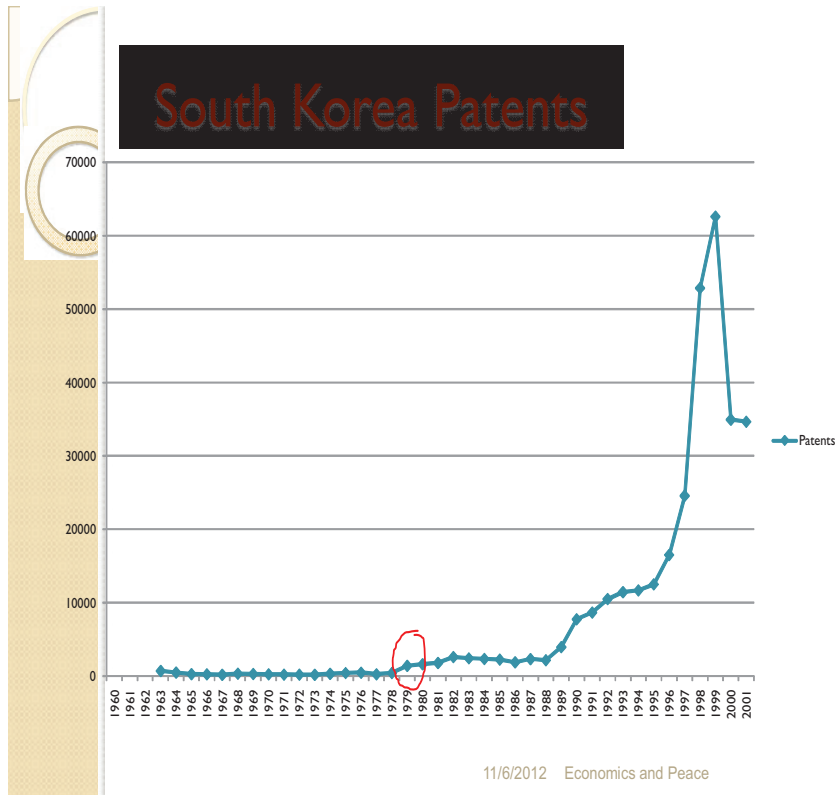
A good example of how innovations can be a road to peace is the price of a CD (not that one!) and a piece of land. A compact disc (CD) costs about Ksh 10. But you can pack in software worth 20,000 ksh. Ten CDs will buy you a piece of land in any place in Kenya. The cost of producing an extra copy of CD worthy ksh 20,000 but protected by a patent is almost zero. Unfortunately, we have not been prolific in innovations, hence got time to fight each other, and perpetuate stereotype about tribes. The next few graphs show our lack of innovations as represented by patents registered.

Figure 3



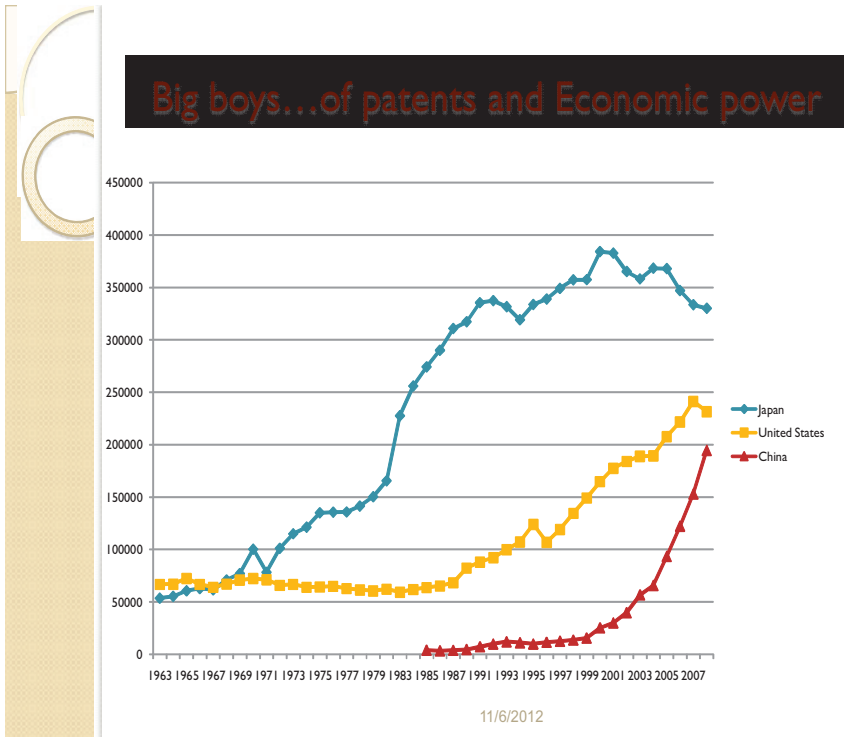
Source: World Intellectual Property Office (WIPO), 2012.

Figure 4



Source: WIPO (2012)

Figure 5

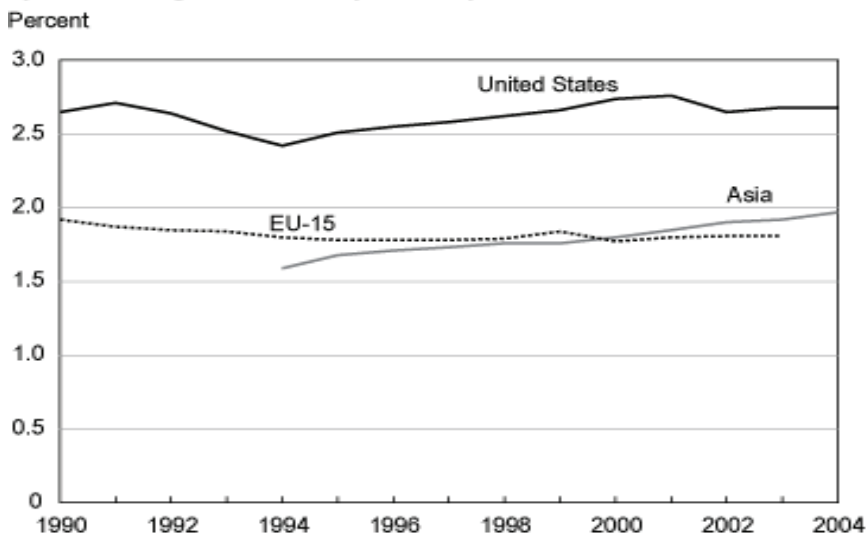


Source: WIPO (2012)

The few graphs indicate that while we file patents in hundreds, other nations file in hundreds of thousands. The patents are turned into businesses which are often more profitable than any piece of land. If more youngsters focused on innovations, it is unlikely that we shall repeat the mistakes of 2008.

More money needs to go to research and development. The current 0.48 per cent of GDP is much less than those of other nations as figure 6 below shows. (See Daily Nation, 29th October 2012).

Figure 6: Research and development share of gross domestic product, by selected region and country/economy: 1990–2004



EU = European Union

NOTE: Asia includes China, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan.

SOURCE: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Main Science and Technology Indicators* (2006).

More critically, is that a fair generation will create a conducive environment for more innovations, and lay ground work for economic growth which will help close the gap between Kibera and Runda. Figure 7 shows the firms that have put more money in Research and development. They are leading brands and sadly none is domiciled in Africa.

Figure 7



Source: The European Commission, but extracted from The Economist.

Invest more in science and technology

Most of the jobs created today are in Science and technology. Examples include Toyota which employs about 300,000 people, IBM 400,000, Wal-Mart 1,900,000. Despite this fact, we have not put enough focus on science and technology. In Kenya, Science Congress winners do not visit The State House as do Drama Festival winners. This creates an impression to students that dancing is more prestigious than doing science experiments. Our leaders rarely focus on Science and technology. When the spacecraft Curiosity landed on Planet Mars, President Obama was the first to talk about it to the American public (THE WHITE HOUSE Office of the Press Secretary, August 6, 2012). American leaders realize that such explorations, have spillovers into the large economy particularly technology from mobile phones to heart pacemakers.

Encourage diversity

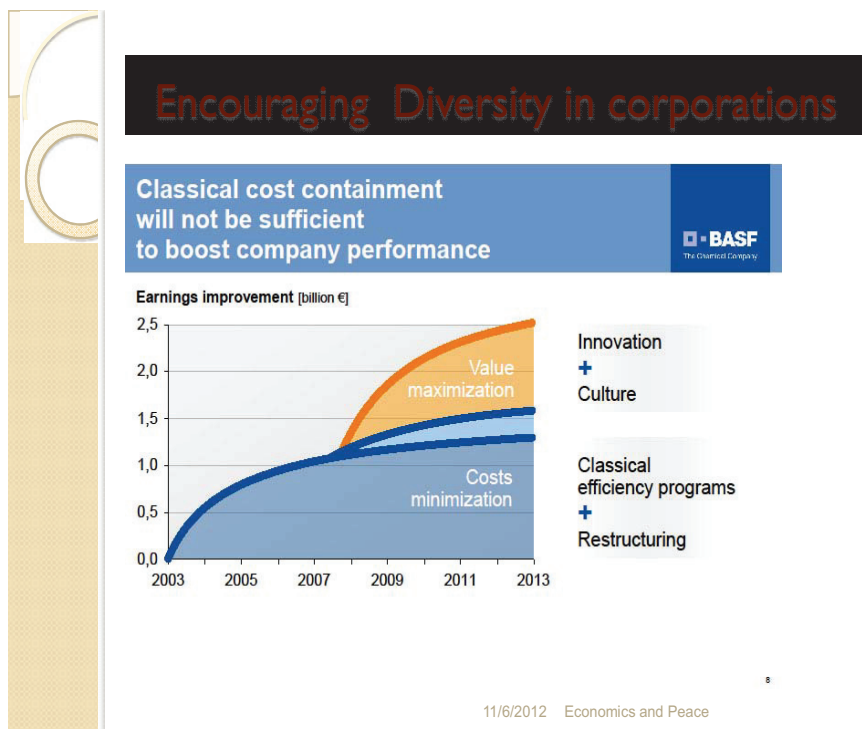
The seeds of PEV may have been planted much earlier through quota system in high school which kept youngsters within their localities. We often fight those

we do not know. Diversity in addition to creating familiarity also forces us to think differently and is an impetus to creativity and innovations.

There are good examples. Silicon Valley is a leader in innovations in the USA but also in diversity, attracting thinkers from all over the world. That is why CISCO, Google, Xerox, Yahoo and other leading firms originated from there.

The same applies to Nairobi which contributes about 50 per cent of Kenya's GDP with only 7 per cent of the country's population. Once in Nairobi, your tribe and race are attenuated by your creativity and innovations and by your ability to make money, though not always honestly. Corporations have seen the need for diversity as the next presentation by BASF shows.

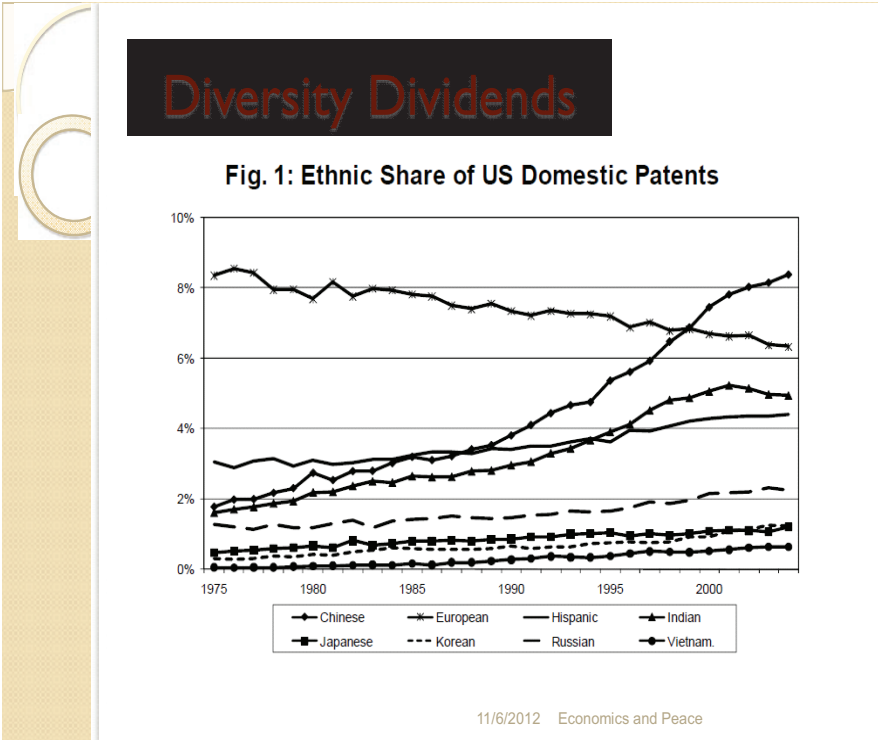
Figure 8



Source: A presentation by Peter van den Hoek BASF to University of Nairobi in 2012.

Culture can include diversity and seeing beyond gender which we seem to see as the only ingredient in diversity. Some observers caution that though we have relaxed the quota system in admission to secondary schools in Kenya, the establishment of universities in every village and hamlet may dilute diversity unless measures are taken to ensure diversity in students' body and faculty. Bringing services closer to people may not always work in higher education. Foley and Kerr (2012) point observe the importance of diversity in USA by disaggregating patents filed by different races. As figure 8 shows.

Figure 9



Source: Foley, C. Fritz, and William R. Kerr. “Ethnic Innovation and U.S. Multinational Firm Activity.” *Management Science* (August, 2012).

The dividends of diversity might be diluted by devolution though good in intentions might have unintended consequences by turning counties into ethnic enclaves. Incidentally, devolution is not driven by politics but by economics

with firm belief that resources centered in Nairobi will be ‘devolved’ to the grassroots (masinani). The reality might end up different; entrepreneurs follow the money, not politics.

Youth are an asset not a threat

Our youth is our greatest asset. Most of the great entrepreneurs started when young, Bill Gates of Microsoft at 19 or Zuckerberg of Facebook at 22. While most think the youth are trouble makers, their creative energy if harnessed could change the economic fortunes of our country. It can be channeled into economic activities. Comparing the demographics of Kenya and Japan brings out the economic potential of our youth.

Table 2

Age group	Kenya (%)	Japan (%)
0-14 years	42.5	13.5
15-64 years	54.8	62.6
65 years and over	2.7	23.9
Population Growth	2.44	-0.077

Source: CIA(2012)

Trade more

Trade is the other road to peace, we understand each more if we trade e.g. Kambas and Kikuyus have no recorded case of fighting. They have always traded. Europe longest period of peace was buoyed by increased internal trade and growth of European Union. The formation of East African Community (EAC) may hold the key to peace in this region. There is however a contradiction; as preach EAC as we preach devolution. We hope the forces of regional integration will outdo those of devolution. We hope that counties will trade more among themselves creating dependency that will ensure more peace. This trade should be driven by young people who we hope will be innovate to come up with products and services that are demanded beyond their counties.

Do not forget emotional peace

There might be no bloodshed, but lots of emotion turmoil could lurk in our midst. Think of the recent reports of domestic violence, suicides, drug abuse, alcoholism, and other social issues like single parenthood which could make life miserable even in the absence of no physical violence during elections. We all aspire to be affluent, not for its own sake, but to be happy and be emotionally satisfied. A good example is in the Daily Nation (2011) which reported that 78 per cent of inmates in Kenyan prisons grew up in homes without a father.

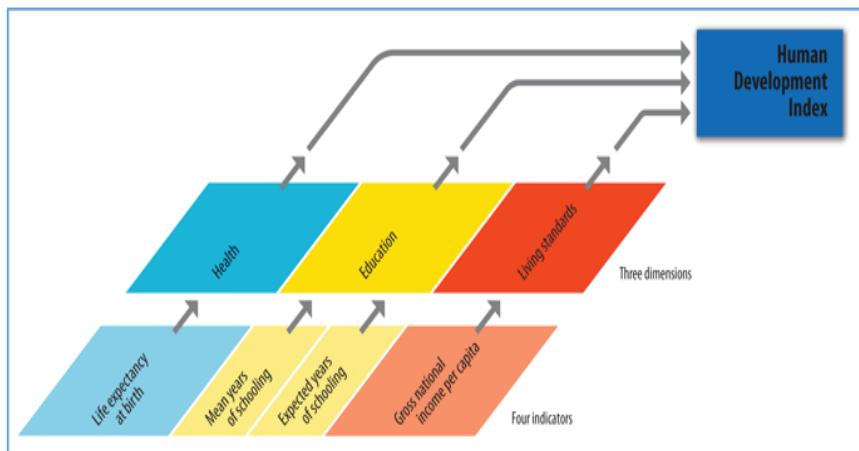
Beyond the polls

We must think of peace in totality, at micro and macro-levels. It is possible to have a prosperous nation economically as measured by GDP growth but with unhappy people. That is why modern economics is moving towards the use of human development index (HDI) as a measure of economic wellbeing beyond the traditional GDP growth rate. This index is more encompassing as figure 10 below shows.

Figure 10: New measure of economic growth

Components of the Human Development Index

The HDI—three dimensions and four indicators



Note: The indicators presented in this figure follow the new methodology, as defined in Box 12.

Source: HORD

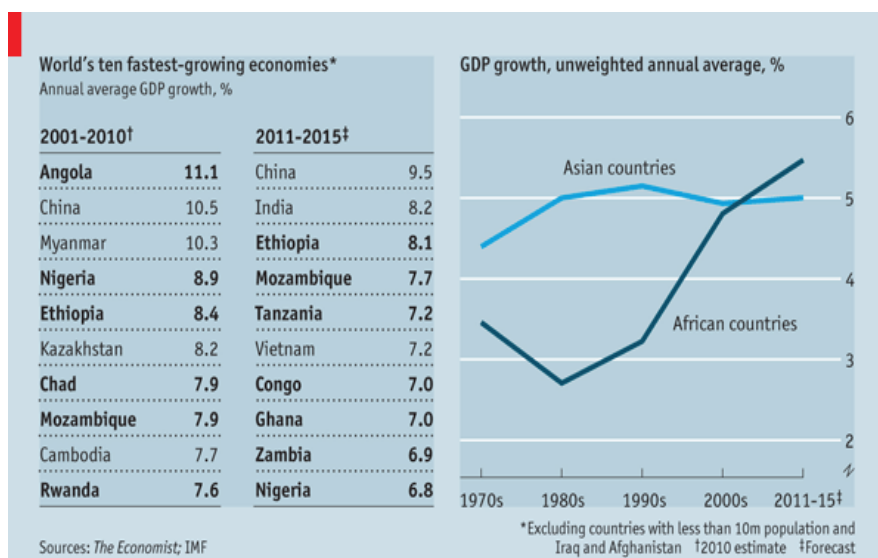
Source: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/hdi/>

Conclusions

After the polls in March 2013, the sun will still rise. It should rise for all of us. It is clear that peaceful and fair polls will lead to greater economic growth, prosperity and peace. Looking at figure 1, it is clear that without PEV our economic growth could have hit 10 per cent, putting the country on the trajectory to achieving Vision 2030.

All economic indicators show that Africa's golden age is nigh, with several African countries enjoying robust economic growth, often as peace dividends after political instability. Table 11 shows the prospects of the continent once labeled "the dark continent".

Table 3: Africa's bright economic prospects



Source: *The Economist*, January 6, 2011

Though Kenya is not among the fastest growing economies in the world, she can join the league by holding peace elections. Add the discovery of oil and the golden future becomes more realistic. The economic implication of the peaceful election is too good to spoil.

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Chapter Six

Social Implications of Peaceful and Fair General Elections in Kenya

Agnes Zani

Introduction

While a competitive electoral process cannot in itself be equated with democracy, it is a cardinal precept of liberal democratic theory and practice. By June 2003, 44 of Sub-Saharan Africa's 48 states had conducted founding elections, typically marking a transition from a long period of authoritarian rule to democratic government. Thirty-three of these countries had gone through a second election cycle, twenty had completed three uninterrupted cycles, and seven had held four or more consecutive elections (Cowen and Laakso, 2002). This goes to show that the right to choose a leader is one of the basic human rights that need to be practiced in free and fair elections. While some of the countries in Africa have met that standard, others have not. Kenyan elections have strived to be free and fair since independence, with varying degrees of success, as this is an essential pillar of the democratization process in any society.

Kenyan elections have been held in the back drop of a struggle not only with political development but also with social and economic development in a context of unmet development targets and goals and a manifestation of poverty, decaying public utilities, collapsing infrastructure social tensions, political turmoil and possibilities of conflict and violence. That possibility for violence and tension has further been heightened by ethnic territoriality, rapid population growth and internal migration, boundary disputes between neighbouring ethnic groups, relative deprivation of some ethnic groups and governance issues in post independence.

Under such a backdrop the possibilities of violence from such tensions is very high. The levels of spatial inequalities, income and wealth concentrations and social injustices have continued to increase the risk of violent elections.

The overall scenario in Kenya has been one where poverty and inequalities (gender, regional, educational, age), unemployment have posed a great challenge in the attainment of development goals and Vision 2030.

The practice and culture of elections in Kenya

Democratic ideals are enshrined in many political cultures of the world. Since independence, Kenya has held elections after every five years. Up to 1992, Kenya was a de jure one party election system and it has been suggested (Makau, 2008) that democratic ideals could not be met under such a system. The freedom of choice and the lack of democratic space was inherent and the three essential components of civil liberties in a society of participation, competition, and legitimacy were not met.

Since 1992, Kenya has practiced multi party elections with all the elections being riddled by violence (Nasongo and Murunga, 2007). The level of violence has been increasing with each election in terms of an increase in incidents of violence and areas where such violence occurs. The cause of this violence has been attributed to political instigation, hinging on negative ethnicity, a factor that has propelled communities to rise against other communities. There have also been allegations of aided/sponsored conflicts instigated from without and aimed at fanning further ethnic rivalry between potential warring neighbours (Donham, 2006).

The post election violence after the 2007 elections was the worst that Kenya has experienced. The grievances were not just about the presidential election but problems related to land, access to pasture, political manipulation, ethnic differences, impunity among those identified as having organized political violence, the winner take all political system, poverty and unemployment among the youth, a close race making it difficult to declare a clear winner, structural weakness of Electoral Commission of Kenya and lack of transparency and accountability by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK), the delayed presidential announcements, incitement by politicians prior to and during the post election violence, greed from political leaders, poor deliberation of historical grievances concerning land and wealth, lack of knowledge, sycophancy and idleness. The social context of these causes are important as real or perceived social deprivations become causal factors of violent elections and further have more negative social implications after the violence.

The reasons and nature of the violence that erupted is not clear, with one set of arguments being that the violence had been planned and the other assertion that the violence was spontaneous. What is evident is the type and

scale of violence that rocked Kenya after the presidential announcement that put back the incumbent Mwai Kibaki back for a second term as the president of Kenya. What started as street demonstrations quickly turned into sessions of killing and looting that saw 1300 Kenyans dead and close to 400,000 displaced. Ethnic rivalries played themselves out, paralyzing the country in both social and economic terms. The violence cost the country about 100 billion Kenya shillings in monetary value and larger unquantifiable amounts in terms of social outcomes related to lost opportunities in employment, health costs as a result of deaths and body injuries, lost properties and the need for new investment to build up these infrastructures again.

Various social factors played into the escalated violence. One critical social factor is the role that was played by the youth. Pertinent questions are being asked about this generation and what that portends for Kenya. Issues such as employment and poverty, land use and alienation, family structures, levels of integration of families, social support groups also influence the way the youth will interpret issues and the role that they can play in solving societal concerns. These inherent problem areas as far as the social structure of Kenya is concerned had not been sufficiently addressed and worked as catalysts to the extended violence after the elections. This is evident in the role that the youth played before, during and after the elections. Unemployment creates a ready mass of youth who are ready to do the bidding. Many youth do not have adequate forums where they raise the social cultural issues that concern them and times of turmoil give them the opportunity to vent out their frustrations.

Apart from the role played by the youth, other issues were long imbibed in the unequal historical trajectory of Kenya resulted in injustices. Such issues include regional inequalities in educational and employment opportunities, unfair land allocation, grapping of land, access to pasture and poverty. This became the agenda of the Kofi Annan lead discussions that resulted in the National Accord that addressed both short term issues such as the immediate action to stop violence and restore fundamental rights and liberties and immediate measures to address the humanitarian crisis, promote reconciliation, and healing and how to overcome the political crisis. Long term issues included addressing constitutional, legal and institutional reforms; land reforms; tackling youth unemployment, tackling poverty, inequity and regional development imbalances, consolidating national unity and cohesion, and addressing impunity, transparency and accountability.

It is important to note that as much as efforts can be made at a national level, individual, communal and social structures need to primarily play a pivotal

role if these initiatives are to be successful. Part of that participation entails a direct link and analysis of the social causes and implication at the individual, community and societal level.

At the individual levels Kenyans need to be very critical about the role they play in instigating and abating violence. To what extent do they interrogate the political agenda presented by politicians? How do they value and protect their freedoms and human rights? How do they meaningfully participate at the individual level to bring about a value laden Kenyan society? At the communal level, how well do they participate, inform and positively influence political processes and choices made? How do they interact and enhance communal living and co-existence? How do Kenyans at a national level protect their resources, practice integrity and collectively seek genuine ways of solving social, cultural and political problems? These values transcend to national values. All this entails being part and parcel of collective action and responsibility.

The social cost of violent elections

Before the 2007 elections in Kenya, the economy was presented as the best performing in the region. Social implications of this are that employment, health and well being were also being addressed and indeed successes noted in these sectors. This turned around almost overnight and Kenyans watched in shock as an otherwise stable country was thrown into civil turmoil. The political crisis led to closure of factories, to accumulation of delays in supplies, cancellation by tour operators and near collapse of the stock market which all had social implications as well. People overnight lost their sources of livelihood, property and families over night.

Kenyans also experienced shortage of essential goods as producers could effectively produce goods and transportation hitches made it impossible for food and goods to be transferred to needy areas. Traders' stalls were razed to the ground, leaving business owners and families with no source of income and very vulnerable.

Apart from these immediate losses, long term losses include a retarding of economic growth that had taken nearly the whole of President Kibaki's first term to build through from 2002 to 2007. During that period, economic growth had improved as a result of resumption of funding from donors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Investors over time saw Kenya as the beacon of peace and increased their investment, thus both initiating and stabilizing investment in various business sectors

including banking, tourism, manufacturing and trading. Economic improvements have implications for social outcomes in terms of education, health, child and adult mortality, life expectancy, social class and well being, gender relations, familial stability, progress and security. All these areas were severely affected by the post election violence.

The cost in terms of human loss for the last election was very high, nearly 1300 people dead and over 400,000 were displaced. In the initial days stores were looted and 80 percent SMEs were affected in Kisumu and Eldoret thus affecting employment and livelihoods of Kenyans. This is immediately linked to food insecurity and housing as most of these Kenyans could not afford to pay their rents. In Kibera, for example, there was agitation that rents should not be paid to landlords which heightened conflict at the tenant landlord level.

Unemployment is directly to with insecurity, as lack of livelihoods would mean the need to seek for alternatives. This implies that some illegal criminal activities were engaged in as a result of such loss of employment. Moreover, the general insecurity acted as a catalyst for opportunistic criminal actions.

Housing and education needs were severely affected. Many Kenyans lost their housing and land in cases where they had to flee to safer regions. Some of these properties were grabbed by neighbours or the indigenous who had purposefully driven the incumbents and viewed them as unwanted in those regions. Internally displaced people (IDPs) became a phenomenon in Kenya. Many of these IDPs lived in camps where they lost their dignity, did not have provisions for housing, food and security, they lost self esteem and a sense of nationhood, all very important cohesive factors in a society. The resettlement of IDPs is not complete, even as Kenya is on the brink of another election.

For many school going children, this displacement also affected their schooling chances and performance. There were some displaced school going who were able to do well but many others must have been affected educationally in terms of access, participation and performance in educational quests. School attainment and outcomes were changed for many such students who had to re-stabilize socially before they could embark on their educational quests.

Class differentials lead to conflicts driven by material interests and envisioned through looting. Gender tensions that were already inherent lead to the rape of women and girls which had dire consequences for their health, well being as women and girls and some of these women have not recovered up to now. Reports on the number of rapes are not conclusive. The ICC report (2008) gives it as 1500 rapes. The Kenya Police Report (2008) figure of overall

rape cases in June 2008 is 1400, up from 876 in June 2007 and that high increase is probably accounted by post election violence cases for only reported cases of rape.

Rape in situations of civil strife and war is used as a weapon against the enemy and the post election violence was no different. Many women who were raped have not come forth to report, a trend happens generally with rape cases. That under reportage indicates that many more women and girls were defiled and raped during the post election violence. Apart from the physical and health implications, including contracting of HIV/AIDS, injuries and unwanted pregnancies, other effects include psychological trauma and death. As a result of rape, key responsibilities of mothering and taking care of household was affected. Moreover, such women are traumatized and this inhibits their participation in society as they may end up being withdrawn. Moreover, their perpetrators have not been brought to book, despite in many cases, where they are known, further sending a message of alienation and detachment for women's problems. Some men were also sodomized and for those who were parents, this had the long term effect of altering their self image and ego thus limiting their participation and contribution in social life. Many Kenyans suffered emotional and psychological turmoil from the violence that affected their roles and interaction with others in society.

The cohesive social fabric of Kenyans was challenged and the ethnic, religious, gender differences escalated into fighting and killings in churches, homes and on the streets. The psychological trauma of all this has not been satisfactorily dealt with. Not enough counseling initiatives were put into place for recovery. Kenya may breed a generation of election violence children who will suffer from trauma and personality problems.

The convergence of low levels of education, poor skill attainment, high population density and high levels of youth unemployment caused a lot of tension in Coast, Nyanza, parts of Central and Western provinces. Ethnic hate played out most evidently when one community rose against another, at the work place, the social club, the church. There was bitter rivalry, acrimony and feelings of mistrust among people who had previously seemingly coexisted.

Overall in terms of social indicators poverty, life expectancy, educational and health outcomes, violence destabilizes gains that have been made as the infrastructures that have helped to bring about the gains are destroyed. The social situation became fragile with inequalities which were already high at the beginning of Kibaki's term Kenya had been ranked tenth on the world list of

countries with the highest levels of inequality in terms of wealth but this has worsened with the Human Development Index HDI continuing to drop increasing (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

The youth of Kenya and their role in elections

The Ministry of Youth and Sports defines youth as an individual between the ages of 15-35 and estimates they constitute 38 percent of the total population of Kenya (GOK, 2007; Vision 2030). However, despite common usage of the term youth and the underlying similarities implied in the usage of the term, youth as very diverse in terms of gender, social class, age, political, religious, ethnic, socio – and cultural differences. Yet most discourses articulate the issues of the youth as though they were one homogenous group.

Thus with such differentials, actions and ideologies among the youth are likely to vary. It has been documented that the youth played a significant part in the election violence in Kenya. It is also important to note that many youth as well played a reconciliatory role and youth organizations have tried to fill the gap in terms of meaningful future action from the youth.

The youth are strategically placed because of various reasons, including their numbers, their forcefulness, their educational potential; they are voters in their own right. Many politicians have been propelled into political success as a result of activities by youth groups as the mobilization potential of this group and capacity to deliver is very high. The strategic interest in the youth generally is a result of the level of education and training that they have received and the importance of this in meeting human resource requirements of the country. They are in a position to ensure that these high standards match the economic and societal need and in the process create a cohesive society.

The youth were involved at various stages in the election of 2007. In the pre election campaigns, youth served as organized groups providing security services to different candidates and political parties and were deployed for polling and tallying in various counting centre during the elections. Mbatia (2008) divides the roles that the youth played into legitimate roles such as being candidates, voters, poll agents and illegitimate roles such as being involved in bribery, intimidation, obstruction in political parties. According to the Human Rights Watch (2002) the level of participation in the two roles was high.

Various reason have been given for illegitimate youth involvement, such as the fact that youth were protesting against perceived electoral irregularities,

incitement by political leaders, need to sustain livelihood and self defense, opportunism among perpetrators, youth disillusionment with status quo, rumours propaganda and reprisals, persistent culture of impunity that can only be responded to by violence.

The youth instigated but also bore the brunt of the violence in terms of education, health, employment outcomes. Dwindling job opportunities further created unemployment among the youth which in turn affected security, social stability, lack of social cohesion; all created further disenfranchisement among that youth.

Youth are upheld as the hope for tomorrow. Their actions now predetermine the future stability of Kenya. The youthfulness, energy, militancy, revolutionary energy, boundless idealism, courageous commitment all signify a potential to build solid political and economic structures that will enhance social outcomes. They should be at the forefront of every significant democratic and revolutionary or transformatory initiative to make Kenya a better place. They have the potential but this has to be harnessed. The role of the youth in the economic and social development in this transition is necessary for a sustainable peaceful, democratic, united and progressive Kenya.

Moreover, the youth should play an instrumental role in revamping the economy, coming up with new business models, crafting new scientific and technological breakthroughs that will take Kenya to the next economic and social level. As Brinkman (2001) states, socio economic factors have been important cause of violence. Mbatia (2008) shows that the unemployed youth were involved in post election violence with unemployment being a catalyst to the violence. Differential education, migration patterns, regional inequalities and negative ethnicity should be addressed sufficiently especially among the Kenyan youth as the implications for not doing so are dire.

Social implications of peaceful elections

In general, elections should promote democratization, the actualization of education, health, economic and social targets. The social indicators for peaceful elections such as equitable sharing of resources give the gradients for a peaceful election. They are likewise the outcome of such peaceful elections. If inequalities are addressed, the flat form for peaceful elections is invariably laid. After peaceful elections, democratic principles continue to support the enactment and protection of those rights for all citizens thus continually improving on the inequalities.

Elections bring to the fore fundamental features of equal citizenship, the right to universal and equal suffrage, the right to choose between candidates and parties, freedom of opinion and voice, and the right to form and lead associations. As a result, citizens gain an awareness of their own roles as equal members of the sovereign power, endowed with rights to participate in the political process and to choose between alternatives under legitimate procedures. The empowerment that comes from voting has important implications beyond the political sphere.

All these rights and privileges can be actualized in a peaceful environment. Contentious issues that Kenya continues to deal with including inequalities in education, health, employment opportunities, regional imbalances, allocation and use of land and resources, dealing with the infrastructure, institutional stability in the economic, political, religious, educational and family realms are paramount for the success of the country. Even though Kenya has not been able to fully address all these issues, strides have been made since independence.

Peaceful elections allow a peaceful coexistence between members of different ethnic groups. Kenya's diversity but unity can be displayed and enhanced through peaceful elections. Ethnic differences and conflicts that tend to escalate during elections further erode the nationhood bond that is critical for social, economic and political development. That peace has implications for the continuation of attainment of set development goals in education, the economic and health sectors, the curtailment of which is evidenced during times of turmoil or civil strife. Kenya can only be able to address these situations when there is peace. The price of civil strife only retards the development record that Kenya has made.

Equitable development, regional balances, devolved systems of governance, capacity building for government bodies, civil society, community organizations is better managed where there is a peaceful and transparent mode of accountability and governance. The constitution of Kenya can best be implemented in a peaceful, accountable environment where human rights can be upheld, where civic education and participation in nation building can be enhanced.

Free, fair and peaceful elections create the space for continued healing and reconciliation within communities that interact and share resources and addressing inequalities, which also help to reduce the poverty gap. The poor constitute more than one half of Kenya's population (Narayan and Nyamweya, 1996; Government of Kenya 1998; 2002). The 2006 Kenya Integrated Household and Budget survey found that 46 percent of Kenyan population is

absolutely poor. Reducing the poverty gap solves other related problems such as access to education and health. Kenya has one of the largest poverty gaps with very few rich and majority poor. Resources and local investments will further help to spur economic growth.

Kenya's dependency ratio stands at 81.4 on every 100 working citizens and the youth are highly represented among the dependents in all regions. With an estimated two million youth who are unemployed (UNDP, 2000) Kenya needs to go into overdrive to ensure employment creation. Some of the initiatives such as the Youth Fund and *Kazi kwa Vijana*, as much as they are on the right track have not had the projected impact in addressing unemployment. Despite these challenges, a peaceful co-existence help Kenya to move towards meeting its targets. Peace facilitates that process of ensuring the life expectancy, child mortality, and primary school, secondary school enrolment rates are stabilized and improved.

The social fabric, cohesion, understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence can be better realized when historical injustices are addressed. The Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission and National Cohesion and Integration Commission are spearheading efforts in that direction. Moreover peaceful elections ensure that the family is strengthened, that children are saved the psychological torture of losing parents, being raped, being traumatized from the violence that Kenya has experienced. Furthermore, appropriate values of trust, loyalty, peace, unity and forgiveness are critical if Kenya is to continue to prosper. These values instill values of nationhood and reduce the incidence of a culture of youth violence through value and character molding.

Bahemuka (1998) notes the need of a paradigm shift to address root causes of human crisis within the context of long term development to enhance human security. The rising concern with the status of disillusioned and marginalized citizenry and a youth in despair creates challenges for peace and security for the nation. As the country prepares for a forth coming election, it is important that the considerations for a peaceful election are put into place.

The bill of rights in Kenya's Constitution (2010) ensures the possibility of these rights being enjoyed by all citizens. Many of these rights cover social and cultural rights that can be facilitated in a committed and peaceful environment and increase the democratic participation of different groups among them the youth.

The constitution also has various provisions to support structural supremacy in the executive, judiciary and legislature. The governance of political

parties, hate speech and the electoral process itself under the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission sets the impetus for a peaceful election. For the Kenyan electorate, a peaceful election is the ticket to unlocking social potential of this country and a way of forging forward in the development agenda.

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Chapter Seven

Role of Political Parties in Ensuring Peaceful and Fair Elections

Njeri Kabeberi

Defining the political party within the Kenyan context

A political party is a political organization that typically seeks to influence government policy, usually by nominating their own candidates and trying to seat them in political office. Parties participate in electoral campaigns, educational outreach or protest actions. They traditionally often espouse an expressed ideology or vision bolstered by a written platform with specific goals, forming a coalition among disparate interests.¹

The Organization of American States (OAS) argues that to achieve democratic sustainability a country cannot only depend on “clean elections”; democratic values through a constant continuity of dynamic exchange of ideas about democratic practice and consolidation of institutions, among them political parties, as well as within government, parliaments and congresses, academic institutions, civil society organizations and others is critical and should be strengthened. It is important to note that political parties form the cornerstone to political, social and economic growth of countries and societies.

The Centre for Multi-Party Democracy (CMD)-Kenya, works towards institutionalizing political parties so that they can take their rightful role in society – issues of corporate governance, financial management, gender equity, inclusivity of minorities and the marginalized, adherence to the constitution and the rule of law form part of our core programs. The law to regulate, manage and finance political parties (Political Parties Act 2007 replaced by Political Parties Act, 2011) is now operational. It is nonetheless important to understand how the political situation deteriorated to the level of needing a law to regulate and manage parties. Indeed many Kenyans still speak ill of their political parties and vehemently disown them at any given opportunity despite being voters

every five years. The comment below gives us an idea on the perspectives by citizens on the Kenyan political party:

‘Our political parties are in a shambles. They are a theatre of all the bad things. From suspected drug lords, high level corruption suspects and The Hague watch list, not forgetting the daily squabbling and threats of splitting. Looking on any of the 47 registered political parties to give us a good leader is probably a pipe dream. We are likely to recycle the old guard who control the nomination process. Whereas political parties are meant to be institutions with ideals and values on which leadership shall be based, ours are simply political vehicles created to ascend to power. They are easily identified with “their” owners. It is not surprising that the top leaders are the undisputed presidential candidates’.²

Since Antony Kagiri made this statement in January 2011, we have a new law in place and parties have been registered afresh. Despite the very strict law, much of his statement still remains true.

Over time we have observed resistance to structured and disciplined acceptance of the various principles that would otherwise make political parties shape up faster than is currently the situation. Generic principles on corporate governance, financial management, and membership development among others that make many other institutions grow have been criticized as not directly relevant to political parties. Many political parties constantly claim that their role is to take over political power and not necessarily sit in boardrooms like corporate organizations. Consequently, there is constant resistance to structured dialogue and systemic organization. Additionally, direct principles of intra-party democracy and a search or identification with a party ideology that would otherwise distinguish and strengthen a political party are equally resisted.

Public perception on the political party is very low in Kenya and this is made worse by activities of members of parliament. Many members of parliament dump their party as soon as they get to parliament making it difficult to follow through on any pre-election promise. In recent times, the public has seen parliament dilute legislation and even make laws that undermine the constitution, yet no political party stands up to such adulteration of the laws or the constitution; leaving that role instead to civil society organizations. It is thus assumed that there is general resistance by parties to checks and balances.

According to Afro barometer, an independent research project on public opinion in sub-Saharan Africa, 66 percent of Kenyans said in 2005 that

competition between political parties “often” or “always” leads to violent conflict (up from 54 percent in 2003).³ The Waki Commission investigating Post Election Violence (PEV) affirms the Afro barometer public opinion findings thus: ‘A particularly disturbing feature of the PEV brought to our attention is that some of the IDPs have suffered successive displacements as a result of previous election related violence. Several witnesses testified that they had suffered multiple evictions in 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2007.’⁴

Historical evolution of party politics in Kenya

Below we provide a short history of political developments in Kenya that show the newness of Kenyan political parties and in a sense explain why political parties are fairly weak and why they have become parties of personalities rather than parties that espouse a particular or specific ideology. Indeed, Kenyan political parties consistently resist change and the path towards democratic and well governed political institutions. This has affected our political growth as a country.

Kenya as a colony

During British colonial rule in Kenya, Africans and Asians were banned from direct political participation until in 1944. Though resistance to colonial rule is recorded as far back as when the British set foot in Kenya with the heroic (read ‘sheroic’) coastal resistance by Mekatilili wa Menza and others as the ‘white man’ moved to the interior, in 1942 members of the Kikuyu, Embu, Meru and Kamba ethnic groups took an oath of unity and secrecy to fight for freedom from British rule. The Mau Mau Movement began with that oath and Kenya embarked on its long hard road to independence. Kenya was put under a State of Emergency from October 1952 to December 1959 as a consequence of the Mau Mau rebellion against British colonial rule. Thousands of Kenyans were incarcerated in detention camps. During this period, African participation in the political process increased rapidly and in 1954 all the three races (European, Asian and African) were admitted into the Kenya Legislative Council on a representative basis.

Kenya achieves independence

In 1957, the first direct elections for Africans to the Legislative Council took place and those elected voiced the people’s agitation for Jomo Kenyatta’s release

from detention. In 1961, Kenyatta was released and on December 12th 1963 when Kenya finally gained independence he became Kenya's first Prime Minister. Kenya became a Republic with Kenyatta as its first President on 12th December 1964. He was then head of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) party. The minority party, the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), representing a coalition of small ethnic groups, dissolved itself voluntarily in 1964 and joined KANU.

The road to Kenyatta's one-party State

A small but significant leftist opposition party, the Kenya People's Union (KPU), was formed in 1966, led by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Kenya's first Vice President (December 1964-May 1965). KPU was banned shortly thereafter and its leader arrested in 1969, after which Kenya became a *de facto* single party state. Kenya's second Vice-President Joseph Zuzarte Murumbi also resigned after a short stint (May 1965-December 1966). Following Kenyatta's death in August 1978, Vice President Daniel Arap Moi succeeded him as Kenya's second President.

The Moi era

In June 1982, Kenya was officially declared a *de jure* one party state by the National Assembly and the constitution was amended accordingly. There was an aborted coup attempt in August of the same year and Parliamentary elections were held in September 1983 under a single party system for the first time since independence. Between 1982 and the next General Election in 1988 (which reinforced the one party rule) freedom of association and participation hit its lowest ebb with many political and human rights activists being incarcerated.

In December 1991, Parliament annulled the one party section of the constitution. New parties were formed in early 1992 and in December of that year, multiparty democracy was restored and elections held with several parties participating. Amidst divisions in the opposition and claims of mass rigging, Moi was re-elected for another 5-year term, and his KANU party retained a majority in the legislature. Due to Inter Party Parliamentary Group (IPPG) reforms in November 1997, political rights were expanded, which led to an explosion in the number of political parties. Again, Moi won re-election as President in the December 1997 elections.

A new democracy in Kenya: President Mwai Kibaki

In October 2002, a coalition of opposition parties joined forces with a faction which broke away from KANU to form the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). In December 2002, the NARC candidate, Mwai Kibaki, was elected the country's third President. President Kibaki received 62% of the vote, and NARC won 59% of the parliamentary seats (130 out of 222). An international survey conducted in January 2003 placed Kenyans as the most optimistic citizens in the world⁵.

'Kenyans are the most optimistic people in the world according to the Gallup International Annual End of Year Survey released recently. The survey interviewed more than 67,500 people in 65 countries during the months of November and December 2002'⁶.

It is presumed that there is more political freedom in President Kibaki's era than any other time on Kenya's political history and that democratic space was opened up so that there is visibility of more coalition politics and an enhancement of multi-party democracy.

The 2007 general election in Kenya

Against this background, Kenya held its tenth General Election on the 27 December 2007. Just like a click of finger tips, the optimism that was Kenya in 2003 totally degenerated into an unprecedented seven-week long spate of violence in some parts of the country, leading to the loss of lives, dislocation of hundreds of thousands of citizens, destruction of property and general disruption of social and economic life of the whole nation.

The 2007 General Election began with a protracted three days dispute on the presidential results under a cloud of suspicion, with allegations of vote inflation, and rising tensions, amid vehement protests, overnight re-tallying of results and chaotic scenes, all beamed live on national and international television at the national tallying centre at the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in Nairobi. Riot police eventually sealed off the tallying centre ahead of the announcement of the results, evicted party agents, observers and the media, and moved the Chairman of the Electoral Commission, Samuel Kivuitu, to another room where Kivuitu went on to declare Kibaki the winner by 4,584,721 votes to Odinga's 4,352,993; placing Mwai Kibaki of Party of national Unity (PNU) ahead of Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Party (ODM) by about 232,000 votes in the hotly contested election with Kalonzo

Musyoka of the Orange Democratic Party-Kenya (ODM-K) coming a distant third.

One hour later, in a hastily convened dusk ceremony, Kibaki was furtively sworn in at the grounds of State House Nairobi for his second term, defiantly calling for the “verdict of the people” to be respected and for “healing and reconciliation” to begin. Immediately the results were announced, Odinga bitterly accused Kibaki of electoral fraud. Odinga’s allegations scored with his supporters who felt cheated by the declared results.

The Kenyan optimism of 2003 and *‘the energy that would have driven the nation’s transformation to its desired destination’* fell flat on our faces as a nation! Institutions placed with the responsibility of both conducting a free, fair and just election i.e the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) and those with the responsibility to defend and protect Kenyans i.e security agencies failed to tap into this optimism and live up to expectations.

When the election was eventually investigated by the Independent Review Commission (IREC) on the 2007 Elections chaired by Justice Johann Kriegler of South Africa, it was found that there were too many electoral malpractices from several regions perpetrated by all the contesting parties to conclusively establish which candidate won the December 2007 Presidential elections. Such malpractices included widespread bribery, vote buying, intimidation and ballot-stuffing by both sides, as well as incompetence from the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) (which was shortly, thereafter, disbanded by Parliament).⁸

At the end of it all, we had lost over 1100 lives as a nation, the injured were estimated to be over 3500 and property worth billions of shillings was lost. Over 600,000 people were displaced. Our landlocked neighbours suffered unprecedented delay of goods as the country’s regional and international standing as the ‘haven of peace’ amidst a region normally torn with civil unrest disappeared instantaneously.

Legal and institutional framework governing the political party

On the eve of the 2007 elections there were more than 300 political parties (though not all were registered with the Registrar of Societies). This proliferation of political parties was checked by enforcement of the Political Parties Act (PPA) 2007, which reduced the number of registered parties to 47 by March 2010 (Registered political parties, 2010)⁹. That Act was not only far more demanding than the Societies Act in terms of initial registration criteria and requirements

for continuation of registration, but also supplied the administrative machinery necessary to monitor and enforce compliance. The Political Parties Act, 2011 replaced PPA 2007 and by April 30th 2012, over fifty (50) political parties had been registered afresh.

The degeneration of political parties from ideology based to ethnic based entities in Kenya (a recipe for violence)

Aquiline Tarimo, in his paper “*Politicization of Ethnic Identities and the Common Good in Kenya*” has stated that;

‘It is often argued that economic insecurity makes self-interest seekers recruit men and women of their own ethnic groups into authoritative positions for the interest of their ethnic groups. Ethnic identities, taken from this perspective, generate a loss of national culture, a culture that could be enriched immensely by the absorption of different cultural identities. If ethnic identities are constructively appropriated they could become a national treasure. Ethnic identities are not evil in themselves as it has been portrayed by the forces of colonization and post-colonial politics. Ethnic identities become harmful when manipulated for self-interest’.

Tarimo further states that it is unrealistic to think that a state can ignore ethnic identities without repercussions. His argument is that “ethnic identities need not be destroyed; what should be destroyed, instead, is the practice of manipulating them. Similarly, it is a mistake to think that state affairs could be dictated from the viewpoint of one ethnic group.”

Nyukuri (1997) argues that one of the long term causes of the clashes in Kenya can be attributed to the colonial legacy; that it is essentially historical but with ramifications in the post independence era. It is indeed a historical fact that the indirect rule administered by the British colonialists later turned out to be the ‘divide and rule’ strategy which polarized the various ethnic groups in Kenya. As a result, Nyukuri states that the early political parties in Kenya that championed the nationalist struggle against colonial establishments were basically “distinct ethnic unions”. The Kikuyu for instance, formed the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), the Akamba formed the Ukambani Members Association (UMA), the Luhya formed the Luhya Union (LU), the Luo formed the Young Kavirondo Association (YKA), the Kalenjin formed the Kalenjin Political Alliance (KPA), the Coastal ethnic groups formed the Mwambao Union Front (MUF), and the Taita formed the Taita Hills Association (THA). He concludes that as a result of the foregoing ethnic trends,

a situation prevailed in this country in which a common political voice was not possible.¹⁰

The Constitution of Kenya and the Political Parties Act (PPA) 2011 have outlawed ethnic-based political parties.¹¹ Parties have been registered afresh under the new Act. Nonetheless the character of most of their leadership continues to be ethnic in that parties continue to appeal to their ethnic communities despite having membership in at least 24 Counties. Ethnic politics recur at ‘convenient’ times in our political history; more so during elections, hindering the growth of true nationalism in our country. From the foregoing it seems Kenya has not had the opportunity to have properly constituted ideological and national political parties and even the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) that took over power and political leadership in 2002 after 39 years of KANU dictatorial rule quickly receded into ethnic enclaves that evidently killed the party “of the second liberation”.

As recent as 2012, party henchmen and women continued to politically position their candidates as the ‘tribal leader/chief’ that cannot and must not be defied. Unpronounced threats linger in the air for candidates or supporters who dare to defy this ‘ethnic law’. The law unfortunately does not deal with these silent threats.

In addition the behavior of political parties, often seen in the eyes of the membership and key party leaders, has rendered many political parties simply ‘political formations’. We witness Secretary Generals and other officials moving from their party to join another party; a practice that is not in line with coalition formations or political party mergers as provided for in the constitution but as individuals abandoning their parties on ethnic considerations.

Political parties and their role in realization of peaceful elections

An election is a formal decision-making process by which a population chooses an individual to hold public office. Elections have been the usual mechanism by which modern representative democracy has operated since the 17th century. Elections are the mechanisms by which public questions are resolved and public contests are determined. Elections may fill offices in the legislature, in the executive and judiciary at the national level and for regional and local government.

Electoral conflict and violence can be defined as any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail, or abuse a political

stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay, or to otherwise influence an electoral process. Electoral violence is violence that threatens the political process. It is the manifestation of negative behaviour that could derail democratic or electoral processes. A well managed electoral process is an alternative to violence as it is a means of achieving good governance. It is when an electoral process is perceived as unfair, unresponsive, or corrupt, that its political legitimacy is compromised and stakeholders are motivated to go outside the established norms to achieve their objectives.

Indeed electoral conflict and violence then become tactics in political competition. Election processes that are fair, responsive, and honest can be similarly victimized. In either scenario, stakeholders use conflict, violence, and threat as means to determine, delay, or otherwise influence the results of the election. There is however a relationship between having a peaceful election or otherwise, the political party, the party leadership and the voter.

It is enlightened and accountable leadership that drives societies towards greater heights. In nations that have selfish and non-accountable leaders, the possibility of for institutions of governance to collapse is high. Like the proverbial elephant, leadership is easy to recognize but difficult to define. This ambiguity might explain why in many African countries the term leader is used in reference to anybody in a position of authority and wields power. It does not matter how he or she exercises such authority or power. How then are we to define individuals such as Adolf Hitler (Germany), Benito Mussolini (Italy) Idi Amin (Uganda) Mobutu Sese Seko (Democratic Republic of Congo) Jean-Bédél Bokassa (Central African Republic), Macías Nguema Biyogo (Equatorial Guinea) and Laurent Gbagbo (Cote d'Ivoire)? Do they qualify to be called leaders? They may well be 'mis-leaders' because they led their countries to destruction and doom'.

Kenyans have audaciously placed a lot of faith in their new constitution which they voted for overwhelmingly in 2010 as well as new legislations and new institutions in the hope that they would help give them leaders who are accountable to the people. The big question remains, whose responsibility is it to rid a nation of bad leaders? Political parties or the citizens? On the one hand, parties have a responsibility to provide leaders of integrity but when they don't, the responsibility is then left with the citizens at voting time. Unfortunately, majority of citizens ignore their responsibility of electing good leaders and instead are happy to follow demagogues and power seekers who have no moral authority to lead. The world over, there are different types of leaders but the final choice is always with the voter.

Moreover, it is only through observance of the rule of law and specifically compliance with election related laws - adherence to the Political Parties Act, the Elections Act and the strict observance of the Codes of Conduct in both those Acts in addition to other laws like the Campaign Finance Act- will compel political parties to provide good leadership to the electorate. Institutions responsible for checking compliance like the Registrar of Political Parties (RPP), the Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), the Constitution Implementation Commission (CIC) and the Judiciary must live up to expectation. There is a closely knit partnership between the voter, the political party and the said institutions in ridding the nation of leadership that breeds violence, corruption and ethnic bigotry, among other things.

Conclusion

Youth can play a critical role in political parties, but only if they join them. Socially committed young leadership can pave the way for more accountable national governance and good governance. The concept of “good governance” often emerges as a model to compare ineffective economies or political bodies with viable economies and political bodies. Because the most “successful” governments in the contemporary world are liberal democratic states concentrated in Europe and the Americas, those countries’ institutions often set the standards by which to compare other states’ institutions. Good governance is an indeterminate term used in development literature to describe how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources in order to guarantee the realization of human rights.

As we have seen political parties have a direct responsibility in ensuring good leadership and good governance to the extent that their candidates will not only uphold the Kenya Constitution but also subsidiary laws relating to political parties and elections. Political parties should further breathe life into Chapter Six of our Constitution dealing with leadership and integrity. When parties ignore issues of integrity and offer Kenyans candidates who are well below the leadership bar we have set as a nation, they are not only failing Kenyans but deliberately refusing to defend the Constitution.

Peaceful, fair and well managed elections ought to result with a good choice of leaders. Political Parties therefore have a responsibility to provide citizens with leaders who resonate with peace, integrity and social justice. The opposite is a potential trigger to violence because leaders who don’t believe in peace,

who have no integrity and who flaunt their ethnic numbers as the only ticket to leadership have an entitlement mentality and posture themselves as the rightful leaders failure to which they instill fear and indirectly blackmail anyone who does not agree or vote for them.

Notes

¹ Redding 2004 -wikipedia

² Antony Kagiri (Capital FM – Jan. 6, 2011)

³ www.cfr.org/kenya/understanding-kenyas-politics/p15322

⁴ www.marsgroupkenya.org/.../2008/.../Chapter_7_Internally_displaced

⁵ www.kenyapolice.go.ke/police%20reforms.asp

⁶ allafrica.com/stories/200301210193.html

⁷ www.kenyapolice.go.ke/police%20reforms.asp

⁸ [IREC report; Executive Summary]

⁹ [IREC report; Executive Summary]

¹⁰ Barasa Kundu Nyukuri; Impact of past & potential ethnic conflicts on Kenyan's stability & development: A paper prepared for the USAID Conference on Conflict resolution in the Greater Horn of Africa June, 1997.

¹¹ See references to the constitution and the PPA in the appendices.

Chapter Eight

National Peace and Stability: The Role of Kenyans in the Diaspora

Olubayi Olubayi

Introduction

Kenyans in the diaspora play a very important role in the future of Kenya. They make important contributions into cultural productions, business ventures, political plans, national peace and stability in terms of ideas and money. The Kenyan diaspora is usually listened to by Kenyans at home because diaspora Kenyans are perceived by their family and friends at home (in Kenya) as having superior ideas and as being capable of funding home-ventures in cultural productions, business and politics. Even the government of Kenya considers the Kenyan diaspora as one of its key sources of money in the form of foreign exchange remittances that total over 250 billion shillings per year.

A diaspora is defined as a population of people that has dispersed from an original home country to other parts of the world, but retains a strong sense of connection to that original home country. The quintessential diaspora is that of the Jews who perceive themselves as having historically spread out from Israel to the rest of the world, and who retain the perception that Israel is a special home for all the Jews even when they themselves have never lived in Israel and do not intend to migrate to Israel.

Nowadays, there is a Kenyan diaspora. There are over one million Kenyans who live and work outside of Kenya. If one counts their children and spouses as Kenyans, the estimate of Kenyans living and/or studying and/or working outside Kenya rises to over three million. Most of these Kenyans live in the USA, the UK, the rest of Europe, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and South Sudan. Smaller numbers live in Dubai, India, and other parts of the world. These Kenyans who live outside Kenya constitute the Kenyan diaspora.

In terms of new ideas and money, it is the Kenyans in the United States and in the UK that have the biggest impact on what happens in Kenya. More than 70% of the money that is recorded as coming to Kenya from the Kenyan diaspora comes from just the United States and the UK. The Kenyan diaspora remits back to Kenya over 250 billion shillings per year; and this amounts to over 7% of Kenya's gross domestic product. Remittances from the diaspora are among the top five sources of foreign exchange for the government of Kenya. This is why both the websites of the Central Bank of Kenya, and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have pages dedicated to the diaspora.

It is ideas, and not money, that are the most important remittance of the Kenyan diaspora to Kenya. Some of these ideas are transferred directly back to Kenya when Kenyans complete their studies or work and return to Kenya. Some of these ideas move back to Kenya through conversations that diaspora Kenyans hold with other Kenyans who happen to be visiting North America or Europe or other parts of the world. Some of these ideas arrive as cultural productions, business ventures or political plans that are developed jointly by Kenyans in Kenya and Kenyans in the diaspora. And some of these ideas bounce back-and-forth between Kenya and its diaspora through all manner of modern telecommunications including social media such as twitter and facebook.

It is important to note that change depends a lot on ideas. During our colonial days we were taught that Africans are inferior to Europeans, and we tended to be subservient to Europeans. The opportunity to sit in the same classrooms with *wazungus* in North America, Europe, Australia and other places has virtually erased this colonial idea of African inferiority from diaspora Kenyans, and the diaspora Kenyans have transmitted this idea to other Kenyans, and the result is that Africans in Kenya, and elsewhere, now control various sectors of their societies, politics and economies with confidence.

In the sphere of cultural productions, diaspora experience has been key in getting Africans to love things African. An intelligent African who left Nairobi in the 1980s or the 1990s dreaming of Western music and literature arrives in London or New York to find himself or herself longing for African music and literature. The love and value of home is easiest discovered outside of home. This new love for things African has been transmitted back to Africa by diaspora Africans including diaspora Kenyans. The best example of this new confidence and "rediscovery" of Africa is seen in the success of Nollywood, and increasingly in the success of Kenyan cinema and music.

Kenyan diaspora groupings

The shock of finding oneself in an extremely foreign country in which even human color is different leads to the formation of two major types of Kenyan diaspora groupings or clusters. Type one groupings or clusters derive from experiences in which every black person becomes one's sister and brother and one begins to consciously value and love all things African; and later one's respect for all of humanity grows, and one begins to see himself or herself in terms that go beyond ethnicity. One's identity expands to encompass being an African and being human. And one's ethos becomes humane, multi-ethnic, multi-racial and democratic.

Type two groupings or clusters derive from experiences in which, out of fear and shock, one looks for people from one's own village or from one's own ethnic group, and one actually migrates from where she or he first landed to another city because that is where one's village-mates live and work; and that is where one migrates to seek the love and warmth of one's own village on a new continent. This type two grouping encourages rejection of new experience and denunciation of democracy. And in the type two groupings or clusters, one's ethos becomes insular, narrowly ethnic, and autocratic.

I will call type one groupings or clusters the Kenyan Kenyanists who dream of a united multi-ethnic and multi-racial modern Kenya. And I will call type two groupings or clusters the Kenyan anti-Kenyanists who reject the dream of a united multi-ethnic and multi-racial Kenya and long for a return to ethnically homogenous enclaves. The ethos of the Kenyanists is democratic. And the ethos of the anti-Kenyanists is ethnic chauvinism.

The Kenyan diaspora Kenyanists who live type one diaspora experiences end up becoming advocates for various strains of pan-Africanism, and for multi-ethnic, multi-racial, democratic Kenya. Their experiences and worldviews are multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and democratic. They are directly involved in the development of a multi-ethnic and multi-racial modern Kenyan national culture. And in terms of electoral politics they have no trouble voting for or advocating for the election of a Kenyan whom they see as qualified for political office without regard to ethnicity. They have a vision for a united, stable and peaceful Kenya.

The Kenyan diaspora anti-Kenyanists who live type two diaspora experiences manifest their trauma of exile by becoming ethnic chauvinists even more strongly than they were before they left Kenya. Many of them are products of Kenya's multi-ethnic boarding schools who switched to ethnic chauvinism

as a means of dealing with culture shock and severe homesickness abroad. They have no time for any Kenyan politician who does not belong to their ethnic group; and they have automatic support for politicians from their ethnic communities, and automatic hate for politicians from other ethnic groups. They are devoid of a vision for a united, stable and peaceful Kenya.

A few hours on twitter and facebook will confirm the existences of these two types of Kenyan diaspora groupings or clusters, the Kenyanists and the anti-Kenyanists.

The existence of two different Kenyan diaspora groupings makes it difficult to speak about the role of the Kenyan diaspora in peaceful elections and in building a united multi-ethnic and multi-racial Kenya. To the question “what is the role of the Kenyan diaspora in Kenyan elections?” There are two opposite answers. One set of diaspora groups will promote peaceful elections because they believe that Kenya should become a multi-ethnic democratic nation. The other set of diaspora groups will work against peaceful elections because they do not believe in the possibility of a united multi-ethnic democratic Kenya that is based on human rights and the rule of law.

Type one diaspora groupings or clusters, the Kenyanists, will continue to promote peace and to model national integration through their utterances, social media viewpoints, multi-ethnic and multi-racial friendships, and their enlightened support of politicians on the basis of ideology and not ethnicity.

Type two diaspora groupings or clusters, the anti-Kenyanists, will continue to work against national cohesion and integration. And will give support, in terms of money and ideas, to members of their ethnic groups who choose to fight for Kenya’s disintegration. They will support politicians on the basis of ethnicity and not ideology. It is these diaspora anti-Kenyanists who contributed heavily to the tragedy of post-election violence in 2007/2008.

The continuing tragedy is that both the Kenyan diaspora Kenyanists and the Kenyan diaspora anti-Kenyanists will be listened to and followed in Kenya because both groups live in the same developed countries and both groups are, therefore, perceived as having superior resources in terms of ideas and money. And it is this fact of residence in developed countries, and the perceived proof of residence in developed countries through remittance of money to Kenya by individuals in both types of groupings or clusters that deepens the perception that all Kenyans in the diaspora possess superiority of resources of ideas and money. This perception of superiority of resources among diaspora Kenyans persists despite the fact that Kenyan entrepreneurs, politicians, and property

moguls resident in Kenya are much wealthier than Kenyans resident in the diaspora.

The influence of both groupings or clusters of the Kenyan diaspora on Kenyans within Kenya is one of the more powerful streams of globalization that influence life in Kenya. This influence is most easily felt and seen among the youth. In his 2007 essay “youth, leadership and culture, “ Prof. Kimani Njogu finds that most Kenyan youth:

“... have become actors in a performance orchestrated by globalization and its instruments. They participate in engaging and, where possible, uprooting the symbols of post colonial munificence. They carry with them media images and attitudes especially from the entertainment industry of the African diaspora. They are searching for an identity different from that assigned by the nationalist project. The search is, however, neither coordinated, nor systematic. It is not ideologically driven because it is not based on reflection, inquiry or dialogue...” (Njogu, 2007. P1)

To borrow Kimani Njogu’s language, the transfer of ideas from the Kenyan diaspora to Kenyans at home is “neither coordinated, nor systematic.” And “it is not ideologically driven because it is not based on reflection.” In other words, when we borrow ideas and methods from the diaspora, we borrow both good ideas and good methods from the Kenyanists, and bad ideas and bad methods from the anti-Kenyans. Some of us borrow ideas and methods that lead to national peace and stability; and simultaneously, others among us borrow ideas and methods that lead to violence and instability.

Therefore, the struggle for a multi-ethnic and multi-racial democracy in Kenya, beginning with peaceful elections, must, of necessity, have both an internal dimension and an external diaspora dimension because what the perceived cash-rich diaspora thinks and does matters. To democratize Kenya we must find ways to inculcate our new national values that are espoused in Article 10 of our 2010 Constitution among Kenyans in Kenya, and among Kenyans in the diaspora, particularly among diaspora Kenyans who constitute what I am calling the type two groupings or clusters that are working against Kenyan national peace and stability. It will not be enough to ignite debate on the values of democracy, multi-ethnic co-existence, and peaceful elections at home alone; we must simultaneously ignite this debate in the Kenyan diaspora because it has a disproportionate influence on what Kenyans within Kenya think and do. There is a need for all Kenyans, whether resident at home or in the diaspora, to understand that Kenya is not yet a nation—and that collective

effort is needed to transform the Kenyan state into a peaceful multi-ethnic and multi-racial democratic nation.

Reflecting on the potential contributions to national peace, stability and development by what I have called type one diaspora groupings or clusters or the Kenyanists, the Kenyan scholar Eric Aseka (2007, p.260) has written that:

“The fact is that forces of globalization are producing new kinds of social identities and movements for political and economic change. In view of this, the whole process of leadership must be seen in terms of the position it should occupy in mediating the encounter between the global forces and the concrete social and political settings in which our historic local cultures are evolving.... It is in this sense that the need to identify the role the intelligentsia and particularly the diasporic intelligentsia should play in a new cultural politics of national constructions becomes apparent.... The reservoir of professional and intellectual capital in diaspora in the West and elsewhere needs to harness its locational advantage as well as material endowments in helping not only to reshape identity politics in Kenya but also to ignite the country's troubled locomotive of development. The diasporic cadre of the intelligentsia can help push horizons of discourse along these charters that will help the Kenyan political elite to get out of tribal politics and parochial agendas that exacerbate conflict and violence.”

Kenya is a State struggling to become a Nation

Kenya is already a State, but it is not yet a nation or nation state; it is in the process of becoming a nation. A state is a geographical territory that is ruled by one central government and has boundaries that are protected and maintained by military and police force. States are usually formed through violence, and their territorial integrity maintained, nowadays, by several means including military force, police force, and international conventions and standards that are enforced by regional bodies such as the African Union, and global entities such as the United Nations (UN). Current international standards do not allow states to invade states, and when they do as in the case when the USA invaded Iraq, the blessings to the UN Security Council are sought.

A nation is not simply a geographical territory in the manner of a state; the concept nation refers to the people. A large group of people (in a country or a region become a nation) when they develop a common national identity, common national consciousness, and a common national culture through various means including mandatory schooling, teaching of national history

and national language in schools; and constant interaction that is enabled by media, and a network of roads and railways.

Diverse communities of people become one nation or nation-state by actual consent to live together, and by maintaining the desire to live together under the same Constitution and laws. Such consent requires believing that all the communities are engaged in a common enterprise, face similar challenges, and pursue the same general goals; and will achieve their social, religious, cultural, and economic goals within the same political entity. In a famous 1882 essay, the French political historian Ernest Renan referred to this constant need for consent as “a daily referendum” in which communities have to constantly maintain the will to live with other communities within the same state—and it is only when this “daily referendum” is successful that the state becomes a nation or a nation-state.

Some states can be described as being virtually mono-ethnic nations that can be referred to as ethnic nations and automatically share a common national culture and language. African examples are Swaziland and Lesotho; European examples are Germany, Iceland and Estonia; Asian examples are North Korea, South Korea, and Japan. Most nations are more complex and are largely multi-ethnic and multi-religious—and are best referred to as civic nations or multi-ethnic nations. Switzerland is an example of a very well established stable and prosperous nation that is strongly multi-ethnic and Multi-lingual. The Switzerland example forces us to realize that there can be a “spiritual glue” or common feeling that can hold diverse communities together despite differences in ethnicity and language. Switzerland is an example of the success of Renan’s “daily referendum” under unlikely circumstances in which homogeneity has not been enforced in the manner in which it was enforced, for example, in the formation of modern France. In multi-ethnic nations such as Kenya, national language and national culture are established as part of state law and policy.

The new Constitution of Kenya (2010) is based on ideas and opinions that were collected from all Kenyan communities, and was written by a committee of experts that included individuals from all regions of Kenya. It is this new constitution that forms the foundation for establishing a cohesive Kenyan nation-state. This Constitution is deliberately designed to address the grievances that made it difficult for all Kenyan communities to give full consent to membership in the Kenyan state during the first 47 years of independence. Without this full consent from all communities, Kenya cannot become a nation.

The most aggrieved parts of Kenya that could not be expected to have a strong feeling of being Kenyan are parts labeled previously as Eastern Province

and North Eastern Province. These pastoralist regions of Kenya were defined as difficult to develop and were therefore neglected by the State. The Kenya Government Sessional Paper No. 10 1965 dismissed the pastoral economy and in the process contributed to unequal development patterns and the marginalization of non-crop-farming communities. This Sessional Paper No. 10 highlighted the areas with perceived potential for growth and relegated other areas to underdevelopment without regard to the people who live there. Other equally divisive legislative frameworks and policies are: the Stock and Produce Theft Act which came into operation on 5th May 1933 and is still in force, and The Indemnity Act of 1970 which gives immunity to perpetrators of state violence against its citizens in Northern Kenya. The new Constitution addresses these issues of marginalization, relative underdevelopment and neglect, and provides a framework for building one cohesive nation with a common national culture.

The fragile rise of a common Kenyan culture

Any carefully examination of life in the state of Kenya over the last 50 years will lead one to the conclusion that an entity called Kenyan Culture has emerged. This Kenyan Culture as a national culture of unity is emerging in Kenya in addition to, not in place of, the over sixty (depending on how the counting is done) ancient ethnic cultures of Kenya. This emerging national Kenyan culture acts as the “glue” that holds the over sixty ethnic groups together in one state that is in the process of becoming a nation-state. Absent this “glue,” the state would either remain “united” only through governmental military and police force, or it would break up into over sixty separate ethnic micro-states. It is the role of the emerging national culture to hold the state together and to convert it into a nation-state.

A national culture promotes a general voluntary acceptance of the legitimacy and sanctity of the multi-ethnic, multicultural nation state. In Kenya, the national culture is just evolving compared with the over sixty mature ancient ethnic-cultures of Kenya. Some dimensions of Kenya’s national culture are already at an advanced stage, while others are just beginning to evolve. For example, the place of Kiswahili as the national language of Kenya is already secure and advanced relative to the much weaker dimensions of national constitutional faith, national consciousness and national ideology.

The emerging national culture is one of many cultures within Kenya. And those many cultures are in active collaboration. It is my observation that the

emerging national culture of Kenya sits both above, and between the over sixty ancient ethnic cultures, deriving strength and ideas from the ethnic cultures and from the rest of our common global human heritage. The over sixty Kenyan ethnic cultures continue to exist and to flourish despite the emergence of an overarching national culture. It is not an either or situation. The growth of the national culture does not mean the death of ethnic cultures. Cultures can and often do coexist. And the identities of a Kenyan do not have to be singular. To inhabit this overarching national culture of unity does not preclude a Kenyan from maintaining full ethnic identity because human beings simultaneously inhabit several identities as so well explained by the Indian economics Nobel laureate and philosopher, Amartya Sen, in his essay on “Making Sense of identity,” in which he says:

“We are all individually involved in identities of various kinds in disparate contexts, in our own respective lives, arising from our background, or associations, or social activities....the same person can be for example a British citizen, of Malaysian origin, with Chinese racial characteristics, a stockbroker, a nonvegetarian, an asthmatic, a linguist, a body builder, a poet, an opponent of abortion, a bird watcher, an astrologer, and one who believes that God created Darwin to test the gullible (Sen, *Identity and Violence*, 2006, p.24).”

Amartya Sen is insistent that when we push a person into a singular identity, be it cultural or religious or ethnic, that we miniaturize the person. It is the multiple identities that we all inhabit simultaneously that enable civic life and citizenship. We associate with other citizens because we share some of our multiple identities with them. The emerging overarching supra-ethnic national culture of unity is founded on our multiple identities and borrows freely from all the fifty ethnic identities in the country and from global sources.

To paraphrase Sen, the same person can be, for example, a Kenyan citizen, of Turkana origin, with Masai ethnic characteristics, a teacher, a *nyama choma* eater, a football player, a dancer, a Christian, an alumnus of Alliance High School, and an in-law to a Kikuyu family. Such a person can associate with thousands of his fellow citizens on each of his different identity dimensions: With fellow Turkana ethnics he will build on shared language, with fellow teachers he will invoke the experience of being a teacher, at the *nyama choma* bar he will find company, at the football field or at the bar watching football he will be fully at home and in good company, at the dances he will have partners who share not ethnicity but a love of dancing, at church he will enjoy Christian fellowship, among Alliance High School alumni he will revel in their

common elitism and mutual concerns, and with his in-laws he will share in the joy of family life as facilitated by the Kiswahili national language, and by the emerging sense of shared membership within the same national culture of Kenya.

The most revolutionary dimension of the emerging national culture of Kenya is the growing voluntary mutual acceptance of the sanctity and legitimacy of one's neighbor's ethnic culture, and the accompanying acceptance of multiple mutually reinforcing ceremonies in important cultural human life cycle events such as marriage, birth and death. This means, for example, the now commonplace inter-ethnic marriage ceremonies in Kenya are conducted not as a one day event in the manner of an American wedding, but as a series of mutually reinforcing ceremonies that acknowledge all the key identities that the bride and groom inhabit. If a Luo man is marrying a Kikuyu woman, for example, there will usually be three major public weddings: the Kikuyu traditional-*ngurario* wedding at the bride's home, the Luo traditional wedding at the groom's home, and the Western-style or Islamic wedding at church or mosque.

What the political scientist, Sanford Levinson (1989), has called "constitutional faith," in his book of the same title, and refers to the complex web of beliefs that provide cohesion and national identity to a multi-ethnic, multi-racial, and multicultural modern nation-state, is not yet fully developed in Kenya. The good news is that Kenya has finally developed a constitution that is acceptable to the majority of Kenyans and is likely to be the basis for the constitutional faith that Sanford Levinson refers to. The gap left by this missing secular constitutional faith, is currently occupied by the ecumenical Christian and Islam religions, and by *Utu* or *Ubuntu* as it is referred to in South Africa. *Utu* is the moral practice and theory of humaneness in which all human beings are treated with dignity, respect, kindness and empathy simply because they are human. *Utu* promotes a sense of "we-ness" for all people. And so, these ecumenical religions, together with our *Utu* or *Ubuntu* are an essential part of the emerging national Kenyan Culture.

Christianity is the religion of about 80% of Kenyans nowadays; Islam is the religion of about 10% of Kenyans; and the remaining 10% of the population practices non-ecumenical faiths such as ancient African religions, Hinduism, Judaism, etc. The success of Christianity in Kenya is a spiritual solution to the crises of indigenous religions in Kenya. In the past, ethnic nationalities of present day Kenya practiced non-ecumenical ethnic-specific religions that still

inform the ethnic rituals and traditions of each of the fifty ethnic groups. Imperialism, colonialism, forced and voluntary migrations, and the resultant changes in living spaces, work, education, and the new ethnic juxtapositions created a crisis of ethnic-specific religions because the new changes called for a much more ecumenical moral order that Christianity and Islam provided. Although many Africans were forced and deceived into Christianity by colonial forces, the full acceptance and celebration of Christianity in post-colonial Kenya cannot be understood within the framework of colonial force.

Kenyans today have the open option to abandon Christianity, but 80% of them have enthusiastically chosen to keep it. I think that the best explanation lies in the fact that it is easier for intimately multi-ethnic societies such as Kenya to enable co-existence within an ecumenical religious framework that identifies one's new neighbor or workmate or school mate or spouse as a fellow sister or a fellow brother in Christ, or in the case of Islam as a co-member of the *umaa*, i.e., the religious community."

Multi-ethnic coexistence and democracy

In order to promote national peace and stability, schools will have to become the main location for teaching people in Kenya to think of themselves as Kenyans and to acquire an expanded sense of empathy that includes all Kenyans regardless of ethnic or racial backgrounds, and to imagine all Kenyans, and indeed all human beings, as being part of the same moral community. The Kenyan sense of "we-ness" will have to be inculcated in our schools because most of our waking and formative time as children is spent in school. In many ways schools influence very strongly who we become.

In Kenya the most obvious proof of the power of schools as socializing agents is seen in the national success of Swahili as a common language—every young person who has spent more than seven years in school speaks Swahili—and therefore virtually all Kenyans speak some Swahili. Just as the schools can teach us Swahili, they can also teach us to live together, to recognize each other, and to become good citizens who are fully aware of our responsibilities to other human beings and to the planet on which we live.

Towards a knowledge economy

In order to develop the sense that we are not caught in a zero-sum game in which the economic success of one ethnic community automatically leads to

the failure of another ethnic community, and in which everything, including our politics, is seen as interethnic competition, Kenyans will have to plan and to develop a knowledge based economy because groups that are highly educated do not live in poverty for a long time; and a knowledge-based economy is the effective alternative to a land-ownership-based economy.

A group, for the purposes of this section of this discussion on the need for a knowledge economy, is defined as either a country or a network of over one million people. This is what I have in mind whenever I talk to students who are interested in the affairs of the economically-poorer regions of the country or world. These regions may be entire countries such as those of the Southern hemisphere or they may be large sections of poverty within highly developed wealthy countries like the United States. The so-called “third world” of poverty is found either as the majority of the population in developing countries, or as a minority of the population within rich countries.

From traveling, research, and thinking, I have come to the conclusion that whenever a group or a country figures out how to equip most of its population with advanced knowledge and skills, that group exits poverty. Put another way, there are no highly educated groups that are simultaneously poor for an extended period of time. A highly educated group may go through some disaster (natural or political) and fall into temporary poverty, but does not long remain poor.

To be poverty stricken is to be without the means of fulfilling one’s basic human needs such as access to safe drinking water, adequate food, suitable security, satisfactory shelter, decent health care, and competent education. Those who are truly poor do not have the means to solve most of their most pressing problems including curable diseases.

Many people are deeply concerned about the link between education and financial or economic success. For groups or nations the relationship is obvious: if the group or country rises to a position where most its population is highly educated and skilled, the group or country automatically works its way out of poverty. I would be happy to change this conclusion if anyone can show me a highly educated country or large group that has stayed mired in poverty for a long time. It seems that knowledgeable and skilled people spontaneously work to solve their pressing problems and to create wealth for themselves. From an evolutionary biology perspective it can be argued that in fact the human brain itself, which we seek to equip and train in education, evolved its complexity for problem solving.

What is true for groups or countries is not always true for specific individuals; and this is a source of confusion and discouragement for many students when they first begin to reflect on the aims of education. Young students quickly realize that there are many very well educated individuals who are quite poor and broke; and that there are very many “idiots” who are quite wealthy. In my travels and discussions, this is a most pressing question for students from lower-income economic backgrounds, students who know that their parents have no money, and that there is no wealth for them to inherit.

These students go for higher education in colleges and universities with the belief that their advanced education will lead to money, wealth, and success. It is true that advanced education and skills will increase the probability of financial success for these worried lower-income background students. However, it is also true that advanced education does not guarantee wealth for the individual the way it ensures wealth for the country or group. That is why we all know highly educated individuals who can hardly buy food for themselves; and we all know morons who own business empires. This raises the question: Should individuals pursue advanced education for group or country or world?

It is my hope that in the 22nd century we shall all define group to mean all of humanity because we now live in one world system and our fates are inevitably entwined. Thinking of “group” in this 22nd century sense, leads me to urge students to pursue advanced education for both self and group. Your advanced education will make it more likely (though not guarantee) that you will, as an individual, have a successful and satisfying life within our highly competitive global knowledge economy; and simultaneously make you a better global citizen who belongs to a “group” that is rising or has risen above poverty.

Every country or group, and our collective humanity will benefit greatly from widespread general education because social development, even more than economic development, relies heavily on that proportion of our populations that is in possession of an excellent general education. It is a general or liberal education that teaches us to cultivate tolerance, and to think broadly about how to reconstruct our countries and world in ways that promote the ideals of the Universal Declaration of Human rights and the Millennium Development Goals. The broadest aim of education is to enable each of us to contribute towards building a better world for all of humanity.

National peace, democracy and stability

The Philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, in his book "Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers" (Appiah, 2006, p. xiii) writes that "the challenge, then, is to take minds and hearts formed over the long millennia of living in local troops and equip them with ideas and institutions that will allow us to live together as the global tribe that we have become." Appiah's point is that citizenship-education broadly conceived must really be aimed at transforming our minds and hearts and preparing us to coexist peacefully and to celebrate diversities of identities. And as Kenyans we should accept Appiah's challenge at home and in the diaspora in order for all of us to contribute towards effecting national peace and stability.

What I have called type one groupings or clusters (the diaspora Kenyanists) already heed Appiah's advice, and have already developed an inclusive multi-ethnic and multi-racial democratic ethos, and are already advocates for a peaceful united Kenya.

Our work in terms of getting Kenyans to take charge of the process of nation-building, national peace and stability, will demand that we establish continuous dialogue with those Kenyans who fall into what I have called type two groupings or clusters (the diaspora anti-Kenyans). In other words, the role of Kenyans in the diaspora in national peace and stability is so important that we cannot afford to ignore any segment of the Kenyan diaspora. All of diaspora matters.

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Chapter Nine

Children of the Post-Colony and Violence: Starting from the Hearth

Doseline Kiguru

Introduction

This paper discusses the rising popularity of the child's perspective in narrating violence in the contemporary African literature. It investigates the role of the child figure in telling narratives of violence based on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's two novels: *Purple Hibiscus* (2004) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). It explores the uniqueness of the child's voice in the two novels and the significance of the domestic violence which is presented in a parallel manner with the violence at the political and state level. It concludes that the foregrounding the violence at the domestic level as an abnormal which has been normalized points out that the freedom individuals enjoy is linked to the larger microcosm of political freedom. That to achieve the wider political stability and peace, one has to start at the most basic human rights. By putting emphasis on the freedom at the family and individual levels, Adichie is offering a solution to the violence which continues to define the post-colony. To enjoy freedom and stability at the political and state level, the people must start with the personal freedom at the domestic level.

In the role of being the mirror of the society, literature from Africa has continued to uniquely capture the historical developments of the postcolonial African states from the pre-colonial era to the present. In the colonial era, the main themes which pre-occupied pre-independence writings by many of the African writers of the time included the affirmation of the African identity and the fight against colonialism and westernization. After political independence in most of the African states, there started emerging works romancing the new nation after the successful overthrow of colonial powers. But the celebration ended soon when the people in the new nation state started

to realize that the post-colonial state was just as bad as the colonial state, if not worse. The writing emerging from this era, therefore, started focusing on the disillusionment of the people. The writers, responding to the political and cultural winds of the day, made attempts to aesthetically explain what the nation state was undergoing. They focused on themes such as political coups, change, corruption, neo-colonialism and democracy, among others.

However, it is notable that the contemporary new and young writers in Africa appear to have abandoned the earlier themes which preoccupied their predecessors. About five decades after most of the African states attained their independence, 'the children of the post-colony', as they have been named by Waberi Abdourahman (1998), have now come of age. This is the generation of writers who were born after the independence of the African states. For this generation, their narratives, though not deviating so much from the political and historical base, are now being told in a different voice. Most of the narratives are concerned with matters of hybridity, multiculturalism, globalization and human rights.

Particularly striking is the figure of the child or the young narrative voice. The writers who fall in this category either employ the child to tell the story or as the protagonist. In Nigeria, the writings of 'the children of the post-colony', to use Aboudrahman Waberi's words, has gone beyond the country and the continental borders. Chimamanda Adichie, Ben Okri and Helon Habila, in Nigeria, have actively employed the voice and the eye of the child, to tell the narratives of the post-colony. Okri, in his trilogy, *The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment* and *Infinite Riches*, has traced the spirit of the spirit-child –the child caught up in the never ending cycle of birth, death and return. Habila narrates his two novels *Measuring Time* and *Waiting for an Angel* through the eyes of children who are growing up. In *Measuring Time*, he tells the story of twin brothers Mamo and LaMamo who face domestic abuse under the guardianship of their father. The boys try to run away from the violence in their family setting only to realize that violence is what defines the whole society. LaMamo, who becomes a child soldier, eventually returns home battered both physically and psychologically. Eventually, he dies as violently as he had lived.

In *Waiting for an Angel*, Habila tells the story of a young journalist who faces violent oppression from the government for daring to speak the truth. Many of the contemporary writers have widely used the figure of the child to tell their narratives. Therefore, the reader today increasingly hears and sees the story of Africa through the voice and perspective of the child.

From the early narratives to the present day ones, the presence of violence cannot be underestimated. While writing about colonialism and the transition that took place in their respective countries as well as the current state of the post-colony, the writers cannot avoid the historical violence that has been used to define Africa from the colonial perspective. This is reflected in the writings of both men and women writers who have been engaged in narrating textual violence, physical as well as psychological violence in the post-colonial African states. In telling the political history of Africa, they are also telling the violent history and therefore engaging in a process of revising the history of Africa.

The writers in the generation of 'the children of the post-colony' appear to have veered away from dealing so much with the issues of colonialism and other forms of political domination. Rather, they are dealing with the new issues emerging in post-colonial states. The economic and cultural hardships associated with globalization, human rights, violence, hybridity and status of the family as a basic unit, are major concerns of the new generation of writers.

This generation of writers is a creation of different economic, political and social situations. In their effort to try and cope with this hybridity, their literature also reflects a sense of hybridity. This may answer the question why most of these writers are preoccupied with the figure of the child in representing their views. This is drawn from the fact that children occupy that space between infancy and adulthood. It is also worth noting that most African nations are only a few decades old since independence and can therefore be considered to be young. This position of the 'in-between' or the 'hybrid' nature of the writers, the new nation state as well as the narrators plays a significant role because it is that position which allows for creation and adoption of new values. It is also a space open for experimentation. Madelaine Hron in "The Figure of the Child in Third-Generation Nigerian Novels" (2008) argues that the hybrid space of childhood enables writers to address themes that may, in fact, be too large for adult fiction.

It should be added that literary works that use children as narrators or protagonists are not necessarily children's literature or 'the coming of age' literature. Writers, just like other artists, have to carefully select their tools and materials to ensure that the finished product has the desired impact. It is in choosing the right tool to pass across the message that writers sometimes use the child narrator or the naïve narrator to narrate an experience. Kathleen Isaacs in "Purple Hibiscus: A Novel" (2005) describes the text as a coming of age novel or high school fiction and recommends it for young adults library.

Another critic, Kristine Huntley describes Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* as 'something that would reputedly appeal to justice-minded teens.' But a close look at these works will reveal what some of these critics have ignored –that the novels, though employing the naïve child narrator to tell the story, are actually concerned with adult themes which cut across age groups and are fairly global. Issues relating to oppression, domestic violence, political violence and human rights, are what these texts deal with. Therefore, they go beyond the purview of the child's eye.

Chimamanda Adichie is fairly new in the writing scene with the first of her three published works first appearing in 2003. She has published two novels and a collection of short stories. What is most notable is that she has widely employed the child's voice and eyes to tell her stories. Christopher E. W. Ouma in "Childhood(s) in *Purple Hibiscus*" (2009) notes that Adichie's literary works "belong to the generation of the children of the post-colony and reflect the beginning of a discourse around children of the post-colony" (48). Ouma further says that "Adichie, sometimes referred to as the daughter of Achebe, embodies the literary child of the post-colony who is coming of age" (49). This paper therefore discusses the significance of the child's voice in narrating violence within the post-colonial African state focusing on Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Adichie in her two novels *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* captures the struggles of a country and the violence that accompanies it through the eyes and voices of children. In the two novels, she uses the narrative voices of Kambili and Ugwu to reveal violence at both domestic and national levels. The children are brought up in violent circumstances which they in turn exploit as a tool of liberation.

In *Purple Hibiscus* the main narrative is about a violent father, Papa Eugene, who is also under the violent rule of the head of state. As the head of state violates and dehumanizes Papa Eugene, so does the father violate and dehumanize his wife and children. This creates a parallel between the state and the family; one epitomizes the other. This is a story of a family which has been so used to domestic violence that the narrator, Kambili, seems to downplay the violence of the state upon its people. She says:

Jaja's defiance seemed to me now like Auntie Ifeoma's experimental purple hibiscus: rare, fragrant with the undertones of freedom, a different kind of freedom from the one the crowds waving green leaves chanted at Government Square after the coup (16).

By using the naïve voice of the child, Adichie is showing the reader the intensity of the domestic violence that the children are experiencing. The oppression is so important that the teenager cannot compare it to the oppression the people are facing from the government. Brenda Cooper affirms this in “Resurgent Spirits, Catholic Echoes of Igbo & Petals of Purple: The Syncretised World of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*” when she notes: ‘If you are fighting for freedom from domestic abuse, if you are searching for an individual identity and a voice without stutter, liberated from terror at home, then a coup, or a rally in Government Square becomes less important, miniaturized by these bigger albeit purportedly smaller concerns’ (11-12).

Through the child narrator the writer is able to bring out the faults and flaws of the world represented in the literary work through the narrator’s inexperience and innocence, leaving the reader to make the judgment. *Purple Hibiscus* presents Kambili as a character who cannot even judge her father harshly despite the violence that he subjects her to. Kambili is telling the story of her abusive father without necessarily pointing fingers at him and accusing him of inhuman treatment. She aims to give facts and let the audience interpret it.

From the beginning of the novel, the reader is introduced to the kind of violence and suffering that the children go through in the hands of the father. However, the child narrator does not point accusing fingers at the father and yet still manages to present the flaws within this father who is a religious fanatic. Kambili only provides the facts as they are and lets the reader interpret the actions of the father. As Heather Hewett in “Coming of Age: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and the Voice of the Third Generation” notes, Kambili therefore creates her open consciousness by ascribing the role of judgment to the reader on many occasions.

Charles Lambert in an interview with *Asylum* about his book *The Scent of Cinnamon & Other Stories* (2008) notes that the innocence of the child narrator is what makes the story more interesting to the adult reader. Sometimes the difference between the child narrator’s innocence and the adult reader’s experience brings about irony in the text:

One of the things I’m doing when I choose to use children as the channel through which the narrative is seen is what Henry James did with Maisie; I’m exploiting their clear-sightedness and innocence. Children see everything, but don’t necessarily understand any of it. Whether they’re protagonists or witnesses, they tend to be one step behind - or to one side of - the attentive adult reader,

which sets up an interesting narrative gap through which the unsettling elements can squeeze (*Asylum*, 2008)

This is evident especially in Kambili's narrative where, in describing the violence that the family goes through in the hands of Papa Eugene, her supposed innocence sharply clashes with the adult reader's experience and usually brings out the irony in the narrative. When the narrator describes the love sip, the reader soon realizes that the sip is the complete opposite of love. This is a sip that burns the tongues of the children and then Kambili would say, "Thank you, Papa" feeling the "love burn my tongue" (31). Later in the novel, the reader further sees Papas 'love' when he burns the feet of his children and beats them for being in contact with their 'heathen' grandfather. Kambili continues to refer to her father's violence as 'love' and this contrast between what the child narrator says and what the reader interprets brings about irony.

Kambili's story is told in the shadow of the state violence that has affected the citizens in the manner of the strong oppressing the weak through violence. The government is working in cahoots with strong nations to ensure that the people do not have a voice. Any attempt at speaking against the government is punished with death. Papa owns *The Standard* which is said to be the last paper speaking the truth about the government. All the other newspapers have been compromised and they have become the government mouthpiece. When Papa's editor Ade Coker persists in publishing the story about Nwankiti Ogechi and refusing the government's bribe, they kill Cocker through a letter bomb. This victimization of the weak at the government's hands evokes sympathy in the reader. However, the victimization is made stronger when the oppression of the weak by the strong is brought out through a child character. The government's silencing of the people is brought out easily through Papa's silencing of his children and wife. The children and their mother, Beatrice, do not speak out. Papa has ensured that they have no voice. The house is characterized by silence and only Papa is allowed to speak out. Later, after Nsukka, Kambili tries to speak out in favour of her grandfather, Papa Nnukwu, when she is found with his painting. Just like Ade Coker, she is punished severely. Papa beats her so bad that she almost dies.

In the *Purple Hibiscus*, Kambili narrates her father's violence towards his children and wife. She especially describes the violence that her mother goes through at the hands of Papa Eugene. She paints the dull thuds she hears coming from her parents' room, the black-purple eyes her mother has the morning after, the blood trickle down the staircase, the children that her mother has lost. After giving the reader the background information on this violence,

Kambili then tells about her mother poisoning her father. The innocence in the voice of the child telling the reader that the mother poisoned her own husband makes the reader less harsh in judging the actions of the mother.

The naivety and the inexperience of the child character evokes sympathy in the reader because of the child's victimization at the hands of a more powerful and dictatorial authority. With the child character or protagonist presenting only the facts of the story without necessarily making judgments, the reader is able to sympathize with the child protagonist for the violence that they are exposed to. Michael Seraphinoff in "Through a Child's Eyes: a Special Role of the Child as Narrator in Macedonian Literature" (2007) notes that the technique of letting the child render these narratives is effective in evoking the reader's sympathy and therefore forcing the society to take action.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the naivety of the boy Ugwu comes from the fact that he is a child and he is also uneducated. When he discusses about the Biafran war, he tells it from his own perspective through the limited narrator point of view. Before he goes to become a child soldier, his experiences about the war are told from his position not only as a child but also as a houseboy. He listens on as his master talks with his colleagues about what is happening in the country.

Ugwu's inexperience in life is portrayed especially when he describes war scenes or scenes in which children are engaged in a war game. In one instance, Ugwu had gone to the school yard which had been converted into a refugee camp during the war and was watching these children as he carried out his chores:

They looked about ten or eleven years old, wore banana leaves on their heads, and held mock guns made from bamboo. The longest gun belonged to the commander of the Biafran side, a tall, stern child with sharp cheekbones... They flung stones with wide sweeps of their arms and then, clutching their guns, they rushed towards the other boys... The bearded man began to clap... Other people clapped and cheered the boys (290)

The violence in the country is being translated to the personal level and the children reflect this through their games and words. If the children cannot make it to the army as soldiers, then the next big thing is to pretend that they are soldiers, finishing off the 'enemy'.

Away from the playing field and into the makeshift classes, the violence is still evident among the children and the innocence and naivety with which these children present the violence leads the reader to the conclusion that the

entire community, including the children, has been dehumanized. Olanna, who acts as a teacher during the war, gets to see the extent to which the violence has affected the children and how they represent this. One day she asks her pupils to draw the two leaders of the war and the children's drawings represent this longing in the children to fight violence with violence:

Nkiruka, her brightest student, shaded contours into the faces and, with a few strokes of her pencil, gave Gowon a snarl and His Excellency a grin. "I want to kill all the vandals, miss," she said (281).

The children have found a means to subvert the chaos in their lives. The media and the adults around these children are only talking about the war and about Biafra winning. The children want to be part of the cause. Even in the makeshift classrooms, the children are still dreaming of killing the 'enemy'.

The children, whose lives and actions reflect Ugwu's growth and decline during war, soon move from just talking about the war to playing war games which become more violent by the day. The children start by fantasizing about being soldiers, they then play with 'sticks shaped like guns' (199) moving on to 'guns made from bamboo' (290), then to pelting stones before moving on to actual bullets. Ugwu watches the boys all the time, telling their narratives of violence. Like Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus*, the child narrative voice here only gives the facts as they see and experience them, leaving the reader to interpret the details and make the judgments. Through the child perspective therefore, the reader is able to interpret the gravity of the war and make deductions on the future of these children.

Ugwu is finally forcefully recruited into the army as a child soldier. But he is not the only one. The army is composed mainly of children who have been so dehumanized by war that they can no longer be considered children. The first time that Ugwu meets High-Tech, "he was startled to see a boy sitting there, humming a song and drinking from an old beer bottle, Ugwu smelt the harshness of local gin as he lowered himself next to the boy and thought that perhaps he was a stunted man and not a boy" (357).

The violence that defines this society has successfully managed to dehumanize the children to an extent that they only identify themselves through violence. From Ugwu's perspective, the reader is introduced to High-Tech who is thirteen but 'the cynicism in his eyes made him seem much older' (358). High-Tech is named so because of his prowess in the war front as a spy. His commander says the boy is 'better than any high-technology spying gadget'

(358). Because of the war, the boy is viewed not as a human being and as a child for that matter, but as a machine.

The boys who have been recruited identify themselves as men only through violence. High-Tech laughs at the crying teenager who has been recruited together with Ugwu. The teenager is crying because he does not want to fight and High-Tech asks, “Aren’t you a man?” (358). According to these child soldiers, you can only become a man by expressing violence. That is why in an effort to prove that he is a man, Ugwu goes ahead to rape a young girl. When the other soldiers ask him, “Target Destroyer, aren’t you a man?” (365) he tries to prove that he is a man the only way he knows how –through violence:

He pulled his trousers down, surprised at the swiftness of his erection. She was dry and tense when he entered her. He did not look at her face, or at the man pinning her down, or at anything at all as he moved quickly and felt his own climax, the rush of fluids to the tips of himself: a self-loathing release (365).

This echoes the child soldier in Emmanuel Dongala’s *Johnny Mad Dog* (2006) who calls himself Johnny Mad Dog and prides himself on his record as a violent rapist. Johnny Wild Dog and his militia gang systematically rape Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and vulnerable girls belonging to opposing ethnic groups and this seems to excite them. This is the only way they are able to prove their manhood. Augustine H. Asaah in ‘Images of Rape in African Fiction: Between the Assumed Fatality of Violence and the Cry for Justice’ notes that rape in *Johnny Chien Mechant* is raised to the level of a ritual. He views rape as a prelude to military violence because initiation and acceptance rites of child soldiers are linked to the raping of victims. He notes:

Since a good number of the militia are adolescents, they see in rape the opportunity to exhibit their manhood and convince others that they are no longer boys. Leadership in the adolescent militia groups is besides bestowed upon those who have caused the most violence to victims and the vulnerable: female subjects, IDPs, and the poor. Even as the value of the sexual act is trivialized through rape, this gendered violence paradoxically infuses a morbid but sacred feeling of fulfillment into the child soldiers’ psyche (349).

By using the child’s point of view therefore, the writer is able to expose the flaws in society. This technique not only exposes the dehumanization of the people as a result of war but also shows the vulnerability of the children and the violence they are forced to go through. Adichie has, as Seraphinoff (2007) notes, employed the child figure as a narrative strategy to speak on themes

which may be uncomfortable or controversial to the general public. That is why the central theme in *Purple Hibiscus* is domestic violence perpetrated by a religious fanatic father, which closely mirrors the government's own oppression and violence upon its citizenry. The same is applied in *Half of a Yellow Sun* where Adichie explores the uncomfortable and controversial truth about forceful recruitment of children into war in various parts of Africa. This is a current issue in Africa today with many rebel soldiers' leaders being under investigation for this crime. The International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2012 sentenced former Liberian leader Charles Taylor to 50 years in prison for crimes against humanity which include forceful recruitment of children into war. Congolese militia leader Thomas Lubanga has also been tried and found guilty of enlisting child soldiers to fight for his militia during the bloody four-year war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The war lasted from 2000 to 2003. In a statement posted on the ICC website, the militia under Lubanga's control abducted and conscripted children as young as eleven years from their homes, schools and football fields to serve as soldiers. They also abducted young girls and used them as sex slaves. The ICC has handed Lubanga a 14 year jail sentence.

The writer employs Kambili's voice to talk about issues of domestic violence and its relationship with state violence. Ugwu's voice is also employed to show the same kind of complicated but tight relationship between violence at the state level and at the domestic level. To ensure the full impact of this kind of violence, Adichie has not only drawn the links between the violence at the domestic level with that at the state level, she has also used the child to narrate the violence. The child's factual presentation of the violence at the domestic level and the political level is a pointer to the violence that continues to define the post-colony today. The child's supposedly naïve perspective aims to reflect the facts of the society in an effort to trigger change.

In an article in which she discusses the role of children in postcolonial literature, Sujala Singh notes that "the child's point of view becomes a means of commenting on violence legitimized at the level of the nation-state, often through compliant parental or familial silences [. . .] It is the bourgeois family or bourgeois adults who mirror the often corrupt, communal, casteist values of the nation state" (15). This is what Adichie brings out in the two novels.

The constant link between the political and the domestic levels of violence, with a special focus on its effects on the individual points to the fact that the freedom individuals enjoy is linked to the larger microcosm of political freedom. That is why her characters are more concerned with the freedom at the domestic

sphere before moving out to engage in the quest for freedom at the political sphere. Odile Cazenave in 'Writing the Child, Youth, and Violence into Francophone Novel from Sub-Saharan Africa' (2005) notes that most female writers bring out the violence at the domestic level as an abnormal which has been normalized. To ensure the full impact of this kind of violence, Adichie has therefore not only drawn the links between the violence at the domestic level with that at the state level, she has also used the child to narrate the violence. By putting emphasis on the freedom at the family and individual levels, the most basic human rights, Adichie is offering a solution to the violence which continues to define the state. In other words, if people enjoy personal freedom at the domestic level, they may easily get freedom at the political level as well.

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Chapter Ten

The Role of Youth in Trans-Local Peace Building Among Pastoralist Communities in Northwestern Kenya

Willis Okumu

Introduction

The Pokot, Samburu and Turkana are pastoralist communities in North-western Kenya who have been perpetrators and victims of a vicious cycle of violent conflict that has claimed lives and destroyed property of unknown value over a long period of time. The violent conflict among these communities has been attributed to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, political incitement, competition over scarce and diminishing water and pasture, celebration of a culture of ‘heroism’ and ‘bravery’ that elevates the social status of raiders, the decline of the role community elders, marginalization by successive governments and little presence of state security. In these three communities violent conflict can be seen in a cycle of revenge killings and cattle raids that often starts with *morans*¹ from one community raiding a rival community either to replenish stock or to feed the highly profitable cattle market that booms in the Rift Valley region and beyond. This spirals into attacks and counter attacks that after a while lead to long periods of hostilities. The trajectory of violent conflict among pastoralists’ communities in Kenya is punctuated by series of massacres.

Violent conflict among these communities can also be seen as a result of neglect by the government of Kenya. The provision of adequate security that protects human life and property is a core function of the state, these communities have never enjoyed being part of the Kenyan state; the state has often had minimal interest in arid and semi-arid lands occupied by pastoralists. The Sessional Paper No 10 of 1965 (GoK 1965) prioritized economic growth of Kenya to “high potential” areas like the White Highlands and other areas

with infrastructure thus laying the foundation of marginalization of pastoralist communities in Kenya.

Several approaches at conflict resolution and peace building, ranging from forceful disarmaments by both the colonial and successive independent Kenyan governments' to the use of traditional authorities and the signing of peace pacts between different communities with penalties for any member who violates the peace, have been implemented. The absence of government has also led to the provision of basic social services by Non-governmental Organizations which are also involved in various efforts at conflict resolution with mixed results.

In this chapter, we examine youth-led trans-local peace building groupings among the Turkana, Pokot and Samburu communities in Northwestern Kenya. In the recent past, following the killing of 31 Samburu herders and 11 Pokot attackers in Kanampiu in Laikipia, it was necessary that young and educated members of these communities take part in inter-community conflict resolution. In doing so, they convened a meeting at Lorrora in Laikipia and resolved to work in unity for peace. Further meetings in Kanampiu, Amaya, Baragoi, Kapedo and Wamba consolidated the idea of "peace caravans" which resolved to promote inter-community peace-building among communities living in East Pokot, Samburu East, Samburu West, Samburu North (Baragoi), Samburu Central and Laikipia West, Laikipia North and Turkana South districts. In peace caravan meetings, *morans* were invited and ceremonial peace rituals such as the slaughter of animals and joint eating of the food took place. Professionals then took centre stage and addressed the meetings together imploring their kinsmen to emulate positive inter-community relations as exhibited by the professionals themselves.

The emergence of local youth as major stakeholders and facilitators of the pastoralists' peacebuilding process after so many decades of inter-community strife can be attributed to the education received by a good number of these youth who have interacted with the "outside" world in terms of education opportunities in high schools and universities and in professional undertakings. Bollig & Österle (2007:33), observed the emergence of the elite Pokot who no longer shared the need to be aggressive and conform to cultural expectations of being a warrior. According to Bollig & Österle (2007:33) education seemed to provide an alternate route for upward social mobility among pastoralist communities.

The approach of these peace caravans involves travelling as a single group to areas of high tension within the three communities, the aim being to present a united front to their warring kinsmen and women and to create a platform for inter-community dialogue on issues that promote conflict with a view to finding amicable solutions. In an interview² with IRIN News (2010), James Teko Lopoyetum, a Pokot member of the Laikipia Peace Caravan gives a broad based approach and attitude change with which the Laikipia Peace Caravan envisions peace-building among these communities;

“Several attempts have been made in the past to end rivalry between us but failed... they all involved the use of force. Our approach is different, our people listen to us and I am confident they will accept our messages. Northern Kenya has always been like a war zone. The situation has worsened in recent years. It is shameful that we always meet to plan funerals and raise money for the injured while professionals from other parts of Kenya meet to discuss development issues” (IRIN News 24th September 2010).

Context of violent conflict

Violent conflict among pastoralists communities have been documented by many scholars since early colonial times. In this section we contextualize violent conflict among the Pokot, Samburu and Turkana into the environmental and traditional, political and economic spheres.

Environmental and traditional context of violent conflict

The environmental and traditional angles to violent conflict among the Samburu, Pokot and Turkana involves the competition over scarce and diminishing water and pasture resources and the need to restock after cattle decimation by drought; retaliatory attacks launched by rival communities to revenge against a raid or killing of a kinsman; the socio-cultural urge to gain respect among one's peers through the heroism bestowed on a celebrated cattle raider; and the ultimate need for cattle accumulation for payment of bride wealth. Bollig & Österle (2007) document the praise, heroism and the associated upward social mobility bestowed on successful raiders vis-à-vis the ridicule and shame seen in the perceived community cowards who have failed to bring home raided cattle; a fact that is closely associated with the socio-cultural need to accumulate capital (cattle) for social obligations such as marriage and sustenance.

According to Leff (2009), scarcity of water and pasture resources has contributed to the escalation of violence among competing pastoralists

communities in East Africa. He argues that droughts force herders to move out of their home areas and to far fields where they have to compete with herders from other communities. This competition is thus the genesis of violent conflict between these communities. Further, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has enabled unscrupulous business elite from within and without the pastoral sector to hire unemployed youth from these communities as commercial raiders. Moreover, raiding has been spurred by political leaders or aspirants to political offices who sponsor commercial raids to raise funds for political campaigns. In addition, common grazing areas such as Kurkur, Lonyek and Amaya where herders from different communities have retreated during periods of droughts have been major areas of conflict; many of these areas have thus been declared “no man’s land³” due to high incidences of violence. Also, increase in population growth and climate change have incapacitated the traditional coping mechanisms previously employed by pastoralists to cope with drought and loss of cattle. Wario et al (2012), takes the view that violent conflict among pastoralists does not occur during droughts: pastoralists prefer peace and tranquility during drought seasons to enable the sharing of scarce resources. Violent conflict expressed through cattle raids is witnessed mainly during the wet seasons in the months of March-April and November-December when there is much grass.

Retaliatory attacks by different pastoralists groups has been observed over a long period of time, the Kenya Human Rights Commission (2010) notes that retaliation by rival communities in response to previous raids or killings have been at the core of recent violence among the Samburu, Turkana and Pokot communities. KHRC points out that retaliatory attacks are prevalent among pastoral communities in Kenya mainly due to the lethargy associated with government response to cattle raids. Krätli & Swift (1999:10) note the devastating effects of retaliatory attacks caused by commercial raids because ‘as the raided herds need to be restocked, professional raids — well equipped, organized, highly effective— may cause a shower of clan raids — smaller, less equipped, extemporaneous — easily generating a chain reaction of violence’.

Political context of violent conflict

The primary objective of violent conflict among pastoralist communities during the electioneering period is to influence voting patterns by eliminating voters from communities perceived to be a threat to the successful candidature of a particular candidate (Krätli & Swift 1999). Violent conflict among the Samburu, Pokot and Turkana has been witnessed during the electoral cycles of Kenya

since the advent of multi-party politics in 1992. For example, the politically related violent conflict among the Samburu and Turkana has been witnessed in Baragoi where the Turkana population has increased over the years leading to the fear of the “foreign” Turkana influencing the local voting patterns in what the Samburu perceive as their exclusive forte⁴. Osamba (2001), (Muchai 2003) and (Weiss 2004) also point out the advent of warlords in 1980s when rich and politically influential members of the pastoralist communities used young men to perpetrate violence with the aim of driving out members of other communities from one constituency to another during electoral periods. Further Osamba (2000) alludes to the exploitation of ethnic rivalries between local political leaders who incite communities into ethnic violence in order to maintain power. KHRC (2001) also found a link between political influence and the Murkutwo Massacre where the Pokot warriors killed 56 Marakwet in March 2001 in the run up to the 2002 General Elections at a time when the then KANU government wanted to maintain its political control over the Marakwet which was drifting to the opposition. Krätli & Swift (1999) also allege the complicity of politicians in funding raids to gain political mileage among the voters and to have an edge over competitors.

The prevalence of conservancies and issues of land tenure is at the core of politics and violent conflict among pastoralist communities in Northwestern Kenya. The Eltungai Conservancy⁵ for instance is seen by the Pokot as an infringement on their pastoral land while the Samburu have welcomed it as a source of Revenue through the Samburu County Council and a buffer zone that protects them from Pokot raids. The perceived political support accorded to the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT)⁶ which runs the conservancy is seen by the Pokot as political support by the Government to the Samburu. Recent studies by Greiner (2012) also reveal conflict meshed into contests over ethnic, administrative and political boundaries. Even though cattle rustling is still seen as the major avenue through which violence is meted out, the coded message here is often about core contests bordering on political exclusion and territory.

The economic context of violent conflict

One of the primary motivations for cattle rustling is to accumulate livestock for mass sale during seasons of high market demand. Therefore violent conflict must also be seen simply from a rational economic perspective of maximization of profits. The gist of the “commercialized” form of cattle raids therefore involves middlemen who hire young men to use excessive violence when raiding cattle

to supply beef to urban populations (KHRC 2010). According to Krätli & Swift (1999) arms in Northern Kenya are often supplied on credit and the same suppliers of arms are also involved in seeking a quick market for sale of raided cattle. This implies a network of commercial interests that sustain violent conflict based on economic gains accrued from the ownership of guns with which cattle raids for commercial purposes is made possible. The symbiotic relationship between the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW), raiders and middlemen in violence escalation contributes significantly to violent conflict among the Turkana, Pokot and Samburu communities. Eaton (2008:94) also views modern cattle raids as driven by material gain observing that these raids involve well-armed professional bandits whose sole motive is plunder. Aided by unscrupulous businessmen or politicians, “raiders are able to sell stolen cattle rapidly and then use the money to pay for new recruits, new weapons or a rapidly growing array of status symbols like designer clothes”.

The eruption of violent conflict between the Pokot and Samburu from 2004 to 2009 has been attributed to contest over the Eltungai Conservancy in Samburu district (Greiner 2012). While the Samburu argued that the land around river Amaya is legally their communal land, it's not lost on independent observers that members of the Pokot community had been living in these areas for a long time. Before the violence, eviction letters⁷ were given to Pokot villagers who previously inhabited the Plateau overlooking River Amaya. The violent conflict that erupted thereafter was thus economic as it was political since land is historically highly contested and emotive not only in Northwestern Kenya but all over country. Further, it is worth-noting that the pressure on land especially due to increase in population growth has also contributed to intra-ethnic tension and violence as witnessed among the Pokot in Amaya where a few Pokot guards employed at Eltungai Conservancy faced opposition for “collaborating” with Samburu over the disputed area between the two communities.

The multi-faceted context of violent conflict among pastoralists groups in Northwestern Kenya therefore implies that peace-building must be approached through background knowledge of the socio-economic and political challenges that have sustained violence among the Turkana, Pokot and Samburu.

Revenge, land, and educated youth

Dave Eaton (2008) in “*The Business of Peace; Raiding and Peace Work along the Kenya-Uganda Border (Part I and Part II)*” gives a critical analysis of the successes and weaknesses of non-state actors in peace-building with a particular focus on

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), faith based organizations (FBO)⁸ and community based organizations (CBO). Even though many organizations and governments in the Karamoja Cluster working on peace-building among pastoralist communities have focused for years on core issues of cattle rustling, proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the diminishing pastures and water resources, it is notable that little has been achieved as many of these communities including the Pokot, Turkana and Samburu communities still experience high levels of insecurity. The problem with many of these approaches has been three-fold. First, many scholars and organizations have ignored the role of “revenge” when addressing violence and conflict among these communities. The spiraling violence that leads to massacres as witnessed in Murkutwo village, Marakwet in 2001, Lokodi village in East Pokot in 2008 and Kanampiu village in Laikipia North in 2009 are often started by petty cattle thieving and incidental murder of a member of one community by the other. The weakness of traditional and modern state security apparatus to address these acts of crime gives room for a spate of inter-community revenge attacks. Given the little attention on the issue of revenge attacks by media, scholars, development workers and governments, success in addressing violent conflict among the Turkana, Pokot and the Samburu has been elusive.

Secondly, even though many scholars have noted “expansionism” as a contributing factor in the spate of endless violence among pastoralist communities in Northwestern Kenya, a critical look into how contests over land and ethnic boundaries contribute to these conflicts has not been given its due attention. In memorandums presented to the Interim Independent Boundaries Review Commission (IIBRC)⁹ of Kenya in 2010, the Pokot, Samburu and Turkana communities laid claim to “ancestral¹⁰” lands currently occupied by either of them. The violence that has long been associated with these communities must then be seen as an attempt to redraw ethnic boundaries by claiming perceived ancestral lands. The narrative of violence over land and boundaries has been witnessed in Kapedo¹¹ between the Pokot and Turkana, in Amaya between the Samburu and Pokot¹² and in Baragoi¹³ between the Turkana and Samburu. This is exemplified by Kitpuru et al (2010:10), who allege that districts neighbouring East Pokot (read communities) are “eyeing” Pokot ancestral areas such as “Kapedo, Naudo, Loruk, Lake Baringo, Mukutani, Amaya and Alkosom”. This points to a shift in the motive of violence from gaining cattle for pride, sustenance or illicit business to violence aimed at reclaiming land. The Samburu on the other hand also handed to IIBRC, a memorandum¹⁴ laying claim to their “lost” ancestral lands such as Malaso, Tinga and Amaya.

Thirdly, even though the government of Kenya as well as non-governmental organizations such as Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), Oxfam GB, the Catholic Church through its Peace and Justice Commission, the Africa Inland Church (AIC), Action Aid, NCCCK, Practical Action (formerly ITDG-EA), ACTED, World Vision and even Tegla Lorupe Foundation have implemented series of conflict resolution projects among pastoralists communities in Northwestern Kenya, violent conflict persists. This points to the lack of involvement of young educated members of these communities in conflict resolution and peace-building. In the past conflict mitigation programmes have originated from “outsiders” meaning persons who themselves are not pastoralists. The leadership of the educated young men and women from the Samburu, Pokot and Turkana in an inter-community driven peace initiative has been lacking in all past mitigation measures implemented. This is mainly due to state marginalization that has for years affected education standards in the whole of Northern Kenya.

The current trends of violent conflict among pastoralists communities in Northwestern Kenya therefore points to an amalgamation of low intensity but vicious cycle of revenge and expansion-motivated attacks spurred by ethnic politics and contests over political and administrative boundaries though mainly expressed through cattle raids. There is need to a different approach in peace building.

Towards peace building

Efforts at peace-building and conflict resolution among pastoralists communities in Kenya have been undertaken by various research institutions, government agencies, Inter-governmental organizations including Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), non-governmental organizations, the private sector and lately groups of professionals born and bred among the warring pastoralists. These efforts have therefore ranged from government disarmaments, promotion of income generation activities to fill the unemployment void, strengthening traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, arming different communities to protect themselves through Kenya Police Reserve and the utilization of the members of the youth-led peace caravan. It is imperative that these approaches to peace-building be analyzed further.

Disarmaments

Disarming pastoral communities across Kenya has for decades been the major approach to “keeping law and order”. Dietz ((1987:187) notes that

disarmaments have sometimes “resulted in outbursts of government violence”. This clearly indicates the brutal methods used by successive administrations in “seeking peace”. Wepundi et al (2011) claim that pastoralists communities in the Northern Kenya have experienced over 100 disarmament exercises over the last 100 years. For example, in 1950 a disarmament operation targeting the Pokot was carried out in what is today Kollowa¹⁵ Division by the colonial government and under the Daniel Arap Moi administration which lasted from 1978 until 2002, Wepundi et al (2011:8) record that ..”not less than 20 operations targeting the Pokot community were carried out”. In 2006, the Government of Kenya launched a military operation aimed at mopping up illegal firearms in several districts in Northwestern Kenya. This operation dubbed “*Dumisha Amani*” (“Maintain Peace” in Swahili) was among several such efforts implemented by the government over the decades. This was succeeded by Operation *Okota 1 and 2* (Collect 1 and 2).

Disarming pastoral communities has often been criticized over human rights violations and brutality by security agencies that have accompanied these exercises over the years (Kopel et al 2006, Palmer & Allan 2010). However, proponents of disarmaments (IGAD 2007) argue that disarmament helps in the reduction of destruction by preventing deaths and injuries to human beings and animals that would have occurred due to possession of weapons; reduces the propensity of criminality in urban areas as a result of movement of weapons from pastoral areas to urban centres; helps in promoting negotiated resolutions to the conflict as opposed to the use of arms; creates an environment for infrastructural and socio-economic development among pastoralists and eliminates chances of threats by neighboring communities who otherwise would be armed.

While concurring with the possibility of building peace through disarmaments of pastoralists Buchanan-Smith & Lind (2005:25) note that previous efforts at mopping up arms have been “notoriously unsuccessful”. They however argue that the adoption of the *Nairobi Declaration*¹⁶ in March 2000 ensures a regional effort and a broader approach to issues of security and development and therefore of at peace-building through arms mop up. While noting the successes of *Operation Dumisha Amani* in Turkana, West Pokot, Marakwet, Samburu, Baringo East, Laikipia East and Trans Nzoia districts, Wepundi et al (2011:10) also point out that *Dumisha Amani* 1 left communities in some places such as Samburu more vulnerable to attacks. This is because the Samburu were the most co-operative in surrendering their arms, while their neighbors are believed to have mostly handed in non-serviceable weapons.

In 2010 the Government of Kenya rolled out the 2nd phase of *Operation Dumisha Amani* which aimed at recovering 50,000 firearms in Northern Kenya (Wepundi et al 2011). Even though this operation was accompanied by “development projects” such as building of schools, sinking of boreholes, construction of Administration Police Posts, water pans and dams, Wepundi et al (2011), point to the lack of incorporation of community leaders’ views and the uncoordinated points of command for the General Service Unit, the Administration Police, the Kenya Police and the Kenya Army as a major reason for its minimal success by recovering 1,201 firearms, 1,665 rounds of ammunition and 201 livestock (Wepundi et al 2011). Kubasu & Munene, while writing in the “*Horn of Africa Bulletin*” (2012:8), argue that peace-building through disarming communities in Northern Kenya must adopt “an approach that is sensitive to conflict dynamics and that works to promote peace”. They opine that *Operation Dumisha Amani II* led to the militarization of the targeted communities thus creating an environment of negativity by pastoralist communities towards the exercise; hence compromising peace-building efforts. UNDP (2010), also shares the view that disarmament as an approach to peace-building should be a measure of last resort. In its study “*Conflict Dynamics in Samburu East, Isiolo and Marsabit South districts of Kenya*” , it recommends that disarmament be carried out only after the government has guaranteed the security of the communities previously engaged in conflict.

Addressing inequality and marginalisation

Poverty, inequality and marginalisation have been pinpointed by many scholars as major reasons for violence among pastoralist communities in northern Kenya (Weiss 2004, Chikwanha 2007, Buchanan-Smith & Lind 2005, Ekuam 2006, Sambanis 2004, Theisen 2010). Consequently efforts at peace building by addressing poverty, inequality and marginalization have been carried out by government agencies, non-governmental organizations’ and even faith based organizations in the larger Northern Kenya region and even more specifically in the wider Laikipia Valley where the East Pokot and Samburu communities live. Weiss (2004) has documented several efforts by different stakeholders working among the Pokot and the Samburu. These include government initiatives such as the Arid Lands Resource Management Project (ALRMP)¹⁸ ; a project implemented in the larger Northern Kenya and funded by the World Bank with a view to enhancing peace building by focusing on environmental resource management, gender inequalities, HIV and AIDs education among pastoralists and income generating activities especially targeting the youth and

women in these communities. According to Weiss (2004), World Vision Area Development Programme (ADP), has been implementing a multi-faceted approach to peace building among communities in the North Rift since 1997. Weiss (2004:95/96) reports that “in July 2003, a cross-cutting peace initiative began to integrate peace and conflict issues throughout development projects. The ADP focuses on water, sanitation, education (including child sponsorship), food security, and other specific community needs such as HIV and AIDS education and advocacy, environmental projects, child rights, and support for Christian impact groups”. According to Weiss, World Vision interventions in Kollowa, Tot and Lokori between the Pokot, Marakwet and Turkana communities were aimed at ending conflict by initiating sustainable livelihoods through small scale business alternatives and to reduce the pastoralists’ dependency on cattle.

Approaching peace building through community development projects is also recommended by Masinde et al (2004) in their analysis of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms among the Pokot, Samburu, Marakwet and Turkana. They advise that provision of water, education, sanitation and food security projects by governmental and non-governmental organizations play a crucial role in inter-ethnic conflict resolution among these communities. Drawing from their experience in Kerio Valley, SNV, NCKK & SARDEP (2001) concur with the implementation of development projects that improve livelihoods and reduce chances of inter-ethnic violence. Moreover, establishing shared resources such as schools and dispensaries between communities is an starting point for inter-community peace-building. Noting that unemployment and general idleness have been blamed for violent inter-ethnic conflict among pastoralist communities in Kerio Valley, SNV et al recommend the establishment of small scale livestock rearing ventures mostly targeting *morans*, involving young men and women from both the Samburu and Pokot in buying and selling of hides and skins through micro-financial projects. However, these inter-community projects are pre-conditioned concerted efforts by local leaders to maintain peace and tranquility.

In using income generating activities as an approach to conflict resolution, the Maralal Catholic Diocese came up with a Livelihoods Project where goats were given to five Pokot, Samburu and Turkana families on pre-condition that once a goat had delivered, its kid would be given to another beneficiary from a different community than the giver (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium 2012:13). This was done based on the culturally accepted notion among these communities that “once I give you a goat we are brothers”. Galgallo & Scott

(2010), while evaluating the CAFOD sponsored Integrated Livelihoods Project in Maralal also argue for the infrastructural access to Suguta Valley to ease positive and peaceful interactions between youths from the various communities. Berger (2003) captures the work of ITDG among the Turkana and Samburu and its positive impact of inter-community poverty alleviation projects on local peace-building efforts by stating;

“Teams of Samburu and Turkana men and women have constructed the dams jointly. The two tribes have much shared history, way of life and intermarriage; conflict has been severe only recently. The dams project has brought both tribes to work together on a cash-for-work scheme, and given the opportunity for informal interaction and renewed recognition of common problems” (2003:253).

“Where sand dams are not appropriate, shallow wells have been improved. Building parapets, and providing a cemented trough for watering livestock have improved the capacity and functioning of traditional hand-dug shallow wells. This it is hoped will prevent conflict arising from digging new wells (which reduces water supply to existing wells). Other benefits are improved hygiene, and reduced time spent on watering livestock” (2003:253).

Traditional conflict resolution systems

The argument for revitalization of traditional conflict resolution and peace-building approaches has been made by several scholars and development practitioners working among pastoralists' communities in Kenya and the Eastern Africa region (Berger 2003, Weiss 2004, Eaton 2008, MacGinty 2008, Ngeiywa 2008, Chopra 2008, Bronkhorst 2011). One of the most elaborate traditional conflict resolution mechanisms is aptly described by Masinde et al (2004). In their research on traditional conflict management mechanisms among the Pokot, Samburu, Turkana and Marakwet in Northwestern Kenya they outline that the Pokot traditionally have an early warning system that alert the Council of Elders (*kokwo*¹⁹) of impending attacks by their neighbours. Secondly, the Pokot often use negotiations with their neighbours to ensure peaceful coexistence and joint utilization of scarce pasture and water resources during droughts. These negotiations may lead to peace pacts which are referred to as *miss* among the Pokot and as *Lmumai* among the Samburu. It is claimed that a Peace Pact agreed upon by the Pokot and Samburu in early 1900 at Mt. Elgon (Masinde et al 2004) ensured peaceful coexistence and even comradeship in cattle raids. This was further renewed in 2001 at Amaya only to be violated in 2004; after which violence erupted between Pokot and Samburu and went on until 2009.

The mediated state

Trans-local peace-building can be seen as having its roots in the rise of a “mediated state”. The phenomenon of the mediated state has been witnessed in many Africa countries and across the world (Central African Republic, Somaliland, Chad and Northern eastern Kenya) where groups of individuals are continually taking a keen interest in the need to pursue peace building efforts through inter-community partnerships aimed at fostering lasting peace outside the official channels of the state. These groups are community members who have interacted with the members of “rival” communities through sharing of schools or professional undertakings and as such can therefore arise above cultural prejudice and ethnic enmities to lead efforts on resolving conflicts between different communities. Scholars have argued that the mediated state has become inevitable since central governments have failed in effectively addressing root causes of violent conflict among its citizens at the periphery (Menkhaus 2008, Boege et al 2008, Weinmann 2009, Moe 2010). According to Menkhaus (2008:15):

“Whether a mediated state strategy is actually an option then depends on the presence of reasonably authoritative local actors which the state can accept (a secessionist polity, for instance, would not be acceptable; nor would a liberation or radical movement bent on the overthrow of the government or entire political system). Finally, for a mediated state strategy to succeed as a peace-building and governance strategy, the sources of local authority must be relatively legitimate and committed to peace and good governance, not predatory or corrupted local elites”.

The emergence of the youth-led peace caravans in response to violent conflict between the Samburu and Pokot communities in Northwestern Kenya can therefore be seen in light of an urgent and necessary reaction by non-state actors from these communities in a bid to foster peace-building while noting the failure of government to do so over the past century. In this case therefore the mediated state is a rational choice accepted by governments to ensure peace-building in their peripheral borderlands. Menkhaus (2005:56) points out that this aspect of the mediated state - not as a policy preference “but rather a default position for weak states seeking to promote governance and security in its frontier areas – sets it apart from other contemporary forms of state “outsourcing” of governance”.

These youth-led peace caravans can thus be viewed as an off-shoot of a mediated state since they comprise of members who have received formal

education and are pursuing different careers across different parts of Kenya as doctors, civil servants, teachers, religious leaders and even politicians. They work in tandem with local elders especially those that sit in the village, locational, divisional and district peace committees. Their input in peace-building efforts is highly valued by the government and it is currently accepted as part of the Kenya Governments National Policy on Peace Building and Conflict Management (GoK 2011). The fact that these youth-led peace caravans are acceptable to the communities involved in conflict, non-governmental organizations and to the government of Kenya as a viable tool for trans-local peace building resonates with Scheye (2009:7-8) who states that “a consensus has emerged within the development community that non-state/local justice and security networks are, often, more effective, accountable, efficient, legitimate, and accessible service providers of justice and safety than are the agencies and institutions of the post-colonial state. These networks, therefore, are indispensable for the short- and intermediate-term distribution and delivery of justice and safety. It is important to underscore that these networks are also associational groups, part and parcel of civil society”.

From the foregoing, it is clear that “trans-local peace-building” as a non-state locally initiated conflict mitigation and peace-building structure run and organized by young educated members of communities in conjunction with community structures to address inter-ethnic violence using traditional and modern conflict interventions in realization of the inability of the state to fully and permanently provide a viable peace-building mechanism.

The peace caravans

Laikipia peace caravan

Naisula Lesuuda²⁰, the Coordinator of the Laikipia Peace caravan, was born in Kirisia Division, Samburu Central district in Samburu County in 1984. She went to Singore Girls High School in Iten Township in the Rift Valley Province and then proceeded to Daystar University where she studied Journalism. As a News Anchor on the national broadcasting television KBC, whenever Naisula appeared on the news screens of most Kenyan homes, she put on a brave face as she eloquently broadcasted the 9.00 p.m. Prime News. In spite of her bravado, no one could tell that day after day, as she reported on the killings in her home area of Samburu in Northwestern Kenya, the news had such a traumatic impact on her. This was until one morning in September 2009 when the Breaking News reported a massacre that had taken place at Kanampiu, and the death toll

kept rising until 40 people lay dead. At this point, she could not cast the News that night and wept for her people and the Kenyans that had been killed in cattle raids. Alongside the immense grief, came a resolve within her and other professional members from the affected communities to do something about the killings and the cattle raids once and for all. This resolve brought forth the Laikipia Peace Caravan (LPC); a peace initiative that was made possible through USAID funding to mitigate the conflict caused by perennial cattle raids among the pastoral communities of Samburu, Turkana and Pokot.

As a young unmarried woman from a pastoral community, Lesuuda stood no chance of influencing her community to end the destructive tradition that was claiming her age mates and possible future husbands for the young girls. The highly patriarchal society had no place for women's voices, let alone unmarried girls. On the other hand, as a tradition, the young women were expected to sing heroic songs as a blessing to the *morans* (warriors), as they prepared for the raids. Following the killings, the professionals joined efforts and resources to appeal to their communities to find a solution to the conflict. During the initial dialogue meetings, three other brave young women teamed up with Lesuuda; a move that encouraged the elderly women to find their voices and speak out. Looking back, they all recall how fearful and scared they were as they stood in front of *morans*, elders and women from each of the communities. Each ethnic group wanted to hear nothing of the other and one could not afford to go to the enemy grounds and expect to come back alive.

Nevertheless, the young women became the forerunners of the peace caravan since they appeared to be none threatening to the *morans*. With hearts in their months and tears of sorrow in their eyes, they introduced a human face into the hardened communities and the *morans* hesitatingly listened to the extra ordinary song. Asked what gave them the courage to stay on, the young women confide that the pain and hopelessness they saw in the eyes of the *morans* was unbearable and they wanted to be a source of hope to them. Naisula was awarded the Order of Grand Warrior (OGW) by the President of Kenya in 2011 in recognition of her efforts at peace-building among the Pokot, Samburu and Turkana communities through the Laikipia Peace Caravan. She is also a recipient of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Wedge Award 2011 for being selected as the Prowe Outstanding Professional Woman.

Kapedo peace caravan

Ken Siwareng Nadeiwa, member of the Kapedo Peace Caravan, was born in 1983 in Barpello village, Nginyang Division, East Pokot district in Baringo

County. He went to AIC Churo High School and then proceeded to Daystar University where he earned a degree in Community Development. He comes from a family of ten siblings and he is the first born. Ken speaks proudly of his membership in the Kapedo Peace Caravan. Being a Pokot he has grown to witness firsthand the devastating effects of violent conflict between the Pokot, Turkana and Samburu. According to Nadeiwa, the Kapedo Peace Caravan was an inevitable idea given the marginalization and lack of interest by the government of Kenya to solve security challenges that have pervaded the area since independence. Young professionals from the region decided to come together and use their influence to encourage peace-building. They went back to their communities and talked to their brothers, sisters and parents to stop the violence. For instance if the peace caravan was headed to the Pokot community, they worked closely with community elders to mobilise the Samburu and Turkana youth who share a common market like in Amaya or Kapedo to attend the peace caravan meetings taking place in Pokotland. This encouraged s open inter community dialogue and the sharing of challenges and possible solutions. The Kapedo Peace Caravan lobbied government departments such as the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Ministry of Internal Security and Provincial Administration to provide vehicles and other logistical support during these functions. These efforts are a gradual process in inter-community youth peace-building.

Samburu north peace caravan

Daniel Ropoki Lemeleny was born in 1982 in Marti Location in Samburu North district (Baragoi). He went to Maralal High School and then proceeded to study Entrepreneurship and Business Management at Daystar University. Daniel asserts that the Samburu North Peace Caravan started off as a meeting for young professionals from the Turkana and Samburu communities to break the deadlock of age old enmity between the two communities living in Baragoi (Samburu North). They sought to try and heal wounds and urge communities to embrace peace. Previous efforts by different organizations had not borne fruit since many targeted trading centers and ignored the opinions of local women, youth and professionals.

The Samburu North Peace Caravan meetings would start with prayers from elders and religious leaders from all the communities present. The local communities were the Chief Guests and were given ample time to talk, ventilate and pour out their bitterness. Daniel recalled for me a case in which a Pokot was killed, and his brother who is a member of the Samburu North Peace

Caravan had to go and calm down Pokot warriors who wanted to attack the Samburu to avenge his brother's death. He argued that the dead Pokot was his own brother and therefore if he didn't see the need for revenge then Pokot warriors should do the same.

The Peace Caravans approach has potential for increasing inter-community dialogue and understanding. The Samburu North Peace Caravan has been able to traverse the breadth of pastoral lands to look for warriors and villagers who have never been reached with the message of peace, Peace activists would go to where communities graze their cattle; their pasture lands. They would target the real actors in the conflicts; that is the armed *morans*. Secondly, the peace activists are the sons and daughters of the Samburu and Pokot. The communities recognize and know that they mean by trying to bring them together. Thirdly, the activists do not pretend to have the solutions; they create a platform for people to negotiate and dialogue.

Facilitating inter-community dialogue

The youth led peace caravans approach to inter-community peace-building has been through facilitating dialogue among the Turkana, Pokot and Samburu communities. The caravans act as an avenue for community members to ventilate their issues openly and seek amicable solutions. To this effect therefore, several meetings involving warriors have been organized particularly in common grazing areas such as Kanampiu in Laikipia North, Ntipakun and Lomirok in Samburu North and Amaya in East Pokot. The role of the Laikipia Peace Caravan in facilitating the formation of Grazing and Peace Committees²¹ in areas where communities share common pasture can also be pointed out. In its tour of Samburu North district between the 14th to the 20th August 2011, the Samburu North Peace Caravan helped in the formation of Peace and Grazing Committees in Suyan, Kawap, Nachola and Marti.

Cessation of hostilities

One of the major achievements of the Laikipia Peace Caravan is the cessation of hostilities which was achieved by convincing *morans* to abandon cattle rustling. In a landmark event at Amaya market in December 2010, the Laikipia Peace Caravan brought members of the Turkana, Samburu and Pokot communities to celebrate One Year of Peace in the region. According to Laikipia Peace Caravan Chairman Richard Leshiyampe, they identified “a few *morans*

and educated them on the need to end cattle rustling and live peacefully. In one year cases of rustling and the resultant deaths have dropped significantly. In the last year, less than 10 people have died in cattle raids and this is tremendous because in the last few years hundreds were killed each year” (Daily Nation, December 23rd 2010).

The 2004-2009 Pokot Samburu violence over land and boundary disputes around Amaya led to the closure of schools such as Amani Primary School and the removal of Samburu students and teachers from Churo High School. The cessation of hostilities therefore enabled not only the reopening of these schools but the return of teachers. The lifting of ‘self-imposed 6 p.m. curfew’²² at Baragoi centre and free movement of both Samburu and Turkana communities and their animals across the main Maralal-Baragoi-Loiyangalani road that was regarded as the divide between the two communities, was made possible through the lobbying of Laikipia Peace Caravan for a joint Turkana-Samburu Kenya Police Reservists (KPR) to be created to respond to conflict incidents.

The first anniversary of the youth-led “Peace Caravans” was celebrated by Pokot, Turkana and Samburu communities in December 2010 at Amaya. This was a very symbolic gesture given that a previous truce among these communities had been solemnized here and marked through the burial of “tools of war” in 2001 only for violence to recur in 2005. The presence of community members from these three communities as well as the members of the Peace Caravans from the Pokot, Samburu and Turkana communities along with the media, gave these youth-led effort positive publicity that Kenyan media rarely gives pastoralist communities. The positive media coverage was critical in winning over many other educated young people to support peace building in Northwestern Kenya. Peace caravans have also used their influence among the Samburu, Turkana and Pokot to support government initiated disarmament programs in efforts to reduce armed conflict in these areas.

The modest success of these youths through the peace caravans in trans-local peace building can be partly attributed to their willingness to partner with other organizations and groups based at the community level who have been implementing projects aimed at peace building and development. A case in point is the partnership the Morijo Integrated Pastoralist Program (MIPP)²³. Online reports from MIPP indicate joint peace meetings held on July 29th 2010 and attended by Samburu and Pokot community members at Siambu-Malaso, while another indicates a peace meeting held on July 30th 2010 with members of Pokot and Samburu communities in Angata Nanyukie, the main message being inter-community peaceful coexistence. This is also reaffirmed

by Paul Mwaniki²⁴ (2011) when he attributes the peaceful grazing of cattle by morans from Pokot and Samburu communities in Laikipia West district to efforts of the Samburu North Peace Caravan.

Peace agreements

The partnership between the peace caravans, local elders, Community Based Organizations, warriors and women groups and the Provincial Administration in Kenya has also led to the formulation of measures aimed at peace-building in the region. The Damu Nyekundu Peace Agreement signed between the Pokot and Samburu communities living in Lorora and Ol Moran in June 2010 in Laikipia North district came against the backdrop of the Kanampiu Massacre. This peace pact was spearheaded by Laikipia Peace Caravan members such as Jonathan Lodumpui. John Emeripus²⁵, a Turkana member of the Wamba Peace Caravan helped in drafting the 13 Commandments to fight cattle rustling which was incorporated into the Kainuk-Sarmach-Turkwel-Masol Corridor Peace Agreement in December 2010. The treaty enables the Pokot and Turkana communities to share water and pasture resources, thus reducing chances of conflict (*Reject Online 2011, The Standard 2011*). Sarah Lochodo²⁶ an Assistant Chief in Kainuk and a renowned peace worker among the Pokot and Turkana captured the multi-stakeholders participation in the signing of the Peace Agreement;

“The Peace Agreement was reached following a meeting between elders from both the Pokot and Turkana communities. Police officers, professionals and chiefs were also present,” (*The Standard 23rd March 2011*).

The Peace Agreement puts in place punitive measures in terms of fines and penalties against perpetrators from both communities. The offences listed in the agreement range from acts of murder, stealing of livestock and even interfering with beehives. The “13 Commandments” have enabled the recovery of stolen livestock thereby reducing cases of revenge attacks that often spiral into massacres as witnessed previously.

Reopening of markets

The cessation of hostilities among the Pokot, Turkana and Samburu led to the reopening of markets and trade routes. The Samburu for instance are now able to trade with the Pokot in Amaya, Malaso, Rumuruti and Loosuk markets as a result of the efforts of the Laikipia Peace Caravan. The markets between these

communities have been avenues for socio-economic interactions for centuries and several of these peace caravans held their meetings in markets shared by at least two communities in conflict. The strategy has been to hold a peace caravan meeting on a market day when the highest number of community members would be able to attend. This is better portrayed by an article entitled “*Guns Fall Silent as Peace Efforts Pay Off*”, in which the author narrates a story about Ronte Lemaramba, a Samburu elder thus:

“Driven by a new initiative for peace, the lull in violence has caused excitement as it has created new opportunities for business. Markets such as Lolkuniani, which had closed, are now bubbling with activity. Dubbed the peace caravan, the campaign is targeting hotspots of violence in areas that have suffered tribal fighting over the years. It involves elders, professionals, and civil society groups, who are crisscrossing these areas urging various communities to accept one another” (*the Standard 13th September 2010*).

Other markets and health centres opened are Longewan, and Suguta Marmar in Loroki division, Losuk in Maralal and Poro in Samburu west.

Conclusion

The emergence of youth-led peace caravans as an avenue for peace building and development among the Pokot, Turkana and Samburu is an important sign of the changing times among pastoralists’ communities in Kenya. These groups, however, have huge tasks ahead in their bid to achieve prosperous and peaceful due to the emerging hostility and contests over rights to land and ethnic boundaries. To address the issue of land, peace caravans will need to go an extra mile and prevail upon politicians from these three communities to refrain from inciting warriors to evict members of other communities who have settled in places such as Amaya, Kapedo and Baragoi. The peace caravan members may use the legal system to achieve this since Chapter Six of the Kenyan Constitution²⁷ prohibits anyone of questionable integrity from seeking public office in Kenya.

Low levels of education among pastoral communities means that youth cannot access crucial information. It is important to develop informative radio programs and to support community radio initiatives. Supporting *Amani* schools is one of the ways through which peace caravans can socialize young people from these communities to look beyond warrior-hood and gain respect and admiration among their peers in the community. It is worth-noting that

many schools in pastoral lands have been managed by churches and NGOs. Therefore, the peace caravans must continue to mentor young boys and girls to seek education as a way through which they can contribute and influence their communities positively. The symbolic shift in upward social mobility from warrior-hood to educated and career-oriented young men and women is crucial to long-term peacebuilding. To sustain this peace however, critical questions regarding land, boundaries, ranches, conservancies and illicit arms trade have to be tackled by both the government and the professionals.

The emergence of a mediated state in the arid and semi-arid lands of Northwestern and Northeastern Kenya through youth-led organizations like Laikipia Peace Caravan, Samburu North Peace Caravan, Kapedo Peace Caravan and Wamba Peace Caravan marks a complete shift from “gun diplomacy” previously witnessed in disarmament campaigns. This is informed by the emergence of a number of young educated elite from pastoralist communities. Trans-local peace building as an off-shoot of the concept of the mediated state therefore exemplifies a viable approach through which sustainable peace can be attained among pastoralist communities in Kenya. Given that this “peace” is brought by the sons and daughters of the Turkana, Pokot and Samburu through open and highly participatory inter-community dialogue in grazing areas and the initiation of development projects, the youth-led peace caravans is an avenue through which the very foundations of violence in Northwestern Kenya can be addressed.

Notes

¹ Is a Maa word meaning warrior also called *Il murani* by the Samburu, *muron* by the Pokot and *Ngimurani* or *Ngithorok* among the Turkana

² The Interview with James Teko Lopoyetum (a Pokot) was conducted by IRIN News on 24th September 2010 at a Laikipia Peace Caravan Meeting at Naisunyai area in Wamba, Samburu district.

³ It is notable here that the so called “no man’s land” are some of the richest grazing areas that previously accommodated cattle from different communities during times of drought.

⁴ Also alluded to by Evans Onyiego of Catholic Peace and Justice Commission Maralal

⁵ This Conservancy continues to be the bone of contention between the Pokot and Samburu, Rev. Musa Maklab a Pokot who lives in Amaya told me that the Pokot are not included in the Group Title deed of the Conservancy and therefore they feel cheated by the Samburu over their land

⁶ The NRT has had massive support from Samburu community, since it is a huge source of revenue for the Samburu County Council, however the NRT recently appointed a Pokot a Manager of the Eltungai Conservancy in efforts to incorporate the Pokot in its management, I also witnessed the posting of 6 Pokot Guards as NRT Rangers even though the Pokot communities were totally opposed in fact the local leadership of Pokot threatened these guards

⁷ The supposed eviction letters were said to have been issued by a Samburu civic leader.

⁸ Its particularly notable that FBOs and churches run most of the social services in pastoralists areas such as schools and health-centres, the weakness or absence of government could explain their work in conflict resolution

⁹ IIBRC was formed under the Constitution of Kenya (Amendment) Act of 2008, Article 41B (1), (2) and was mandated to make recommendations to Parliament on delimitation of constituencies under Article 41C (a) of the Constitution of Kenya

¹⁰ Historically, many pastoralists' communities were nomadic and therefore, the notion of ancestral lands cannot be very accurate.

¹¹ The Kapedo conflict flared up after the release and adoption of the Interim Independent Boundaries Review Commission, the conflict between Pokot and Turkana concerns boundary with Pokot producing colonial maps to support their claim. See Kipturu Jacob, Kapoi John & Nabuya Victor 2010; Memorandum by East Pokot Leaders, Professionals and Community Council of Elders to Hon. Andrew Ligale the Chair of Interim Independent Boundaries Review Commission (IIBRC)

¹² Personal interviews in Amaya

¹³ Interview with Evans Onyiego of Catholic Peace and Justice Commission, Maralal Diocese

¹⁴ Samburu Memorandum was presented to IIBRC at 2nd March 2010 at Allamano Hall, Maralal by community leaders.

¹⁵ Kollowa is also an administrative unit (Division) in East Pokot district inhabited by the Pokot also called Koloa

¹⁶ Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa was signed on 15th March 2000 and can be found at [http://www.recsasec.org/pdf/Nairobi Declaration.pdf](http://www.recsasec.org/pdf/Nairobi%20Declaration.pdf) it was signed by Burundi, DR Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, The Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Accessed on 14th April 2012

¹⁷ Horn of Africa Bulletin is a publication of Life & Peace Institute and several versions are available on <http://www.life-peace.org/resources/publications/horn-of-africa-bulletin/> Accessed on 8th April 2012

¹⁸ ALRMP was initiated in 1996. See map of districts covered by ALRMP at: http://www.aridland.go.ke/dm/alrmp_map.pdf Accessed on 11th May 2012

¹⁹ Also called *Lpayiani* among the Samburu and *Ngikathukoi* by the Turkana

²⁰ Lesuuda was awarded Order of Grand Warrior by the President of Kenya in 2011 also received International Labour Organisation Wedge Award 2011 for Prowe Outstanding Professional Woman. See “*Her Cause Captured Kibakis Eye*” <http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000058109&pageNo=1> accessed on 13th May 2012.

²¹ Details of these committees are contained in Laikipia Peace Caravan Report on Samburu North district meetings held from 14th-20th August 2011.

²² Notes from discussion with Lesuuda in September 2011.

²³ Information about MIPPP can be found on <http://artofpeace.weebly.com>. Accessed on 15th May 2012.

²⁴ Paul Mwanikis article appears on Issue 048 of the Reject Online Bi-Monthly Newspaper of October 1st-15th 2011 it can be accessed at: http://www.mdcafrica.org/documents/reject/Reject_048.pdf accessed on 7th April 2012.

²⁵ John Emeripus works as Information and Public Communications Officer at the Ministry of Information, Kenya.

²⁶ Ms. Lochodo was recently featured in Joan B.Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice 2010 Women PeaceMakers Program. Her page is http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/profile/SarahAkoruLochodo?xg_source=activity accessed on 19th May 2012.

²⁷ The Constitution of Kenya 2010 can be found at <http://www.kenyalaw.org/klr/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/ConstitutionofKenya2010.pdf> accessed on 1st of June 2002.

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About the Contributors

Agnes Zani teaches in the Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi.

Chrispine Oduor Owino works at the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA).

David S. Majanja is a High Court Judge.

Doseline Kiguru teaches at the University of Nairobi.

Kimani Njogu is a cultural analyst and Director of Twaweza Communications.

Margaret Wamuyu works with the National Gender and Equity Commission.

Njeri Kabeberi is the Executive Director, Centre for Multiparty Democracy.

Olubayi Olubayi works with the Global Literacy Project.

Suba Churchill is the Coordinator of the National Civil Society Congress (NCEC).

X.N. Iraki teaches in the School of Business, University of Nairobi.

Willis Okumu works with the Peace and Collaborative Network.

YOUTH AND PEACEFUL ELECTION IN KENYA

Elections provide a tremendous opportunity for national transformation and the pursuit of democratic practice. They can be a moment of national renewal. However, in most of Africa elections are often characterized by violent conflict as politicians seek to capture or maintain power through ethnic mobilization, propaganda and misrepresentation. Considering opportunities offered by information technology especially mobile phones and the discovery of extensive natural resources, Africa has an opportunity to significantly change the lives of ordinary citizens. But this transformation requires that youth are fully 'present' in the political, economic, social and cultural arenas. They will need to marshal their energies and stay focused on the things that are important for the continent of Africa. In the case of Kenya, youth should not wait to be invited to take up political leadership. Instead, they will need to invite themselves to the table and take advantage of the opportunity provided in Constitution and demand accountability and transparency in the conduct of national affairs.

This book is part of ongoing work at Twaweza Communications in the pursuit of democracy, peace and justice. Themes covered include youth and leadership; elections and peace; youth as peace makers; family and global values among other topics.



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